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Protecting Dixie: Southern Girlhood in Children's Literature, 1852-1920

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PROTECTING DIXIE: SOUTHERN GIRLHOOD IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE, 1852-1920

by

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Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
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ABSTRACT

PROTECTING DIXIE: SOUTHERN GIRLHOOD

IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE, 1852-1920

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Most scholarship about girlhood in children's literature tends to rely on national models of girlhood. My project complicates those models by demonstrating how region shapes distinct forms of American girlhood. In particular, I examine representations of southern girlhood in children's literature published between 1852 and 1920, drawing on the four types of literature that most featured southern girls during this time period: abolitionist literature, Confederate literature, postbellum plantation fiction, and family stories. Using a historicist methodology and spatial analysis, I place these texts in relation to information about the spatial arrangements and protocols of southern domestic sites. By viewing girlhood in terms of how girls move within and use these domestic spaces, I argue that children's writers construct southern girls as the protectors of the antebellum South. Girls offer forms of protection that play a crucial role in in preserving, strengthening, and romanticizing southern antebellum values. In some instances, children's authors suggest that girls can protect the South and preserve southern cultural ideals in ways that men, women, or boys cannot. By privileging the contributions of girls over those of adults, children's books disrupt the barrier between adult/child in order to maintain other hierarchies central to white southern lifestyles, such as master/slave, white/black, and rural/urban. As a result, these fictional girls reconfigure ideas about age and gender to protect racial and agrarian systems. This regional lens illustrates how

American girlhood is not a monolithic category, and my project provides a more diverse approach to understanding the varied ways children's writers represent girls.

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A Dissertation
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my parents, Steve and Kim Hakala, and my sister, Sarah Hakala. Thank you for praying for me, encouraging me, and making me laugh throughout the process of writing this dissertation. I am also grateful for my great-great aunt, Mary Miller, who never threw anything away and left a wealth of historical information about the South and early-twentieth-century girlhood.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: DOMESTIC SPACES AND REGIONAL GIRLHOODS

Some of the most popular and enduring American girls from the Golden Age of children's literature include Jo March, Katy Carr, Rebecca Randall, Pollyanna Whittier, Elsie Dinsmore, and Dorothy Gale. Although these girls share certain experiences, such as being an orphan or a tomboy, they come from diverse places. Jo, Rebecca, and Pollyanna grow up in New England; Dorothy and Katy have midwestern homes; and Elsie comes of age on a southern plantation. As these locations suggest, children's authors do not represent girlhood as a universal experience but as a regionally specific one. Historically, America's separation into colonies, territories, and states created diverse regional identities, which became more pronounced during the nineteenth century through westward expansion, an influx of immigrants, industrialization in the North, the debate over the expansion of slavery, and the Civil War. These experiences contributed to sectionalism—the early-nineteenth-century term for the tendency of Americans to think of themselves belonging to a specific region in addition to the country as a whole. Representing and influencing these tendencies, children's writers explored regional definitions and their effects upon children during the Golden Age of children's literature in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In particular, many children's authors wrote about the experiences that impacted the regional identity of the American South, such as slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. Children's writers distinguish the South in a variety of books written during this time period, including national best sellers such as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, the Uncle Remus stories by Joel Chandler Harris, the Elsie Dinsmore series by

Martha Finley, and The Little Colonel series by Annie Fellows Johnston. However, only one southern girl, Elsie Dinsmore, commonly appears in critical studies of children's books published during this era.[1] Aligning Elsie with her contemporaries below the Mason-Dixon line, this project shifts focus away from northern and midwestern girls.

Through investigating constructions of southern girls in children's literature, I argue that regional definitions of girlhood, in addition to national models, need consideration when examining gender in children's works. In studies of literature for and about girls, current scholarship tends to rely on broad national models, and scholars often discuss girlhood in terms of their British or American traits. For instance, Shirley Foster and Judy Simons, as well as Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig, argue that American girls are more independent and experience more freedoms from societal expectations than British girls because of the pioneer lifestyle in the United States (Foster and Simons 16; Cadogan and Craig 30). Likewise, Gillian Avery observes that, as a result of this independent spirit, the tomboy figure is more popular in American children's literature than in British in the latter half of the nineteenth century (9). Different countries certainly produce different models and expectations for girls; however, I contend that viewing American girls in terms of national characteristics overlooks the ways in which girls develop traits, encounter prescribed roles, and have experiences that are specific to their

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[1]Elsie is the only southern girl discussed in *You're a Brick, Angela!: A New Look at Girls' Fiction from 1839-1975* by Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig, as well as *Sisters, Schoolgirls, and Sleuths: Girls' Series Books in America* by Carolyn Carpan. Other studies of fiction for girls, such as *What Katy Read: Feminist Re-Readings of "Classic" Stories for Girls* by Shirley Foster and Judy Simons, *Disciplines of Virtue: Girls' Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* by Lynne Vallone, and *The Girl's Own: Cultural Histories of the Anglo-American Girl, 1830-1915* edited by Claudia Nelson and Lynne Vallone, do not include Elsie or other southern girls.

region. For example, southern girls consistently engage in athletic, outdoor play in ways that appear more tomboyish than American girls from other regions. Moreover, not all American girls are more independent than British girls; slave girls and emancipated girls living in the postbellum South endure many mental, emotional, and physical constraints. Current critical discussions of American girls tend to focus exclusively on white girls, yet black girls—especially southern ones—did not have the same opportunities and thus do not fit into the same critical models. My dissertation, therefore, demonstrates how attention to regional variation provides a more nuanced understanding of American girls and girlhoods in children's literature.

To explore how regional identity impacts literary constructions of girls, this project focuses on a variety of southern girlhoods in four types of children's fiction that were prominent during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: abolitionist literature, Confederate literature, postbellum plantation fiction,[2] and family stories. In all of these categories, authors depict southern girls as uniquely influenced by their regional culture and landscape. While other categories, such as fantasy or adventure stories, represent southern girls, these four types of literature have a more detailed emphasis on southern girls. The stories are contingent on southern girls, and the texts show girls shaping the

[2] Postbellum plantation fiction is the term most scholars use to describe the category of books written from the end of the Civil War through the early twentieth century that romanticized the plantation and developed the cult of the Lost Cause. Paula Connolly refers to these books as "postplantation novels," but I chose to use "postbellum plantation fiction" because historical research by Charles Aiken indicates the plantation did not enter a "post" stage and disappear in the late nineteenth century; rather, it adapted into new forms. These books also draw upon the tradition of the plantation romance, a term most scholars use for southern books set on plantations but written in the antebellum period. For more about the plantation romance, see Lucinda MacKethan's essay, "Genres of Southern Literature."

future of the South in significant ways.[3] In addition, it is necessary to consider how the narrative purpose of fictional girls varies depending on the type of literature in which these characters appear: for instance, a girl in an abolitionist story might expose the evils associated with slavery, while a girl in a plantation novel might emphasize slavery's "virtues." Even as their purposes diverge, however, I investigate the ways in which young female characters express, adhere to, and impact regional identities classified as southern.

Through examining girls and girlhoods in these four categories, I argue that children's authors construct southern girls as the protectors of the antebellum South. Both black and white southern girls are depicted as active enforcers of a plantation-era culture, although they tend to offer protection in different ways. Rather than functioning as passive receivers of these values and traditions, young female characters shape this culture and demonstrate its benefits, even if they live off plantations or after the Civil War. Girls offer forms of protection that play a crucial role in preserving, strengthening, and romanticizing southern antebellum values. In some instances, children's authors suggest that southern girls can protect southern cultural ideals in ways that men, women, or boys cannot. By privileging the contributions of girls over those of adults, children's books about southern girls disrupt the barrier between adult/child in order to maintain other hierarchies central to white southern lifestyles, such as master/slave, white/black, and rural/urban. As a result, these fictional girls reconfigure ideas about age and gender to protect racial and agrarian systems. These texts construct a South where the line

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[3] An example of a southern children's fantasy story is Cora Semmes Ives' *The Princess of the Moon: A Confederate Fairy Story* (1869) about a young Confederate soldier who flees the war-torn South for an agrarian utopia on the moon. A southern adventure novel is *Robert and Harold: Or The Young Marooners on the Florida Coast* (1852/1863) by Francis Robert Goulding, which is a castaway story about two boys, their cousin, and their sister.

between adulthood and childhood is more fluid than in other regions, but in doing so, they create a fantasy of what girls could actually do. As protectors of the South, fictional girls have an agency that then-living girls did not.

Specifically, I focus on children's literature published between 1852 and 1920. The Golden Age of children's literature roughly ranges from 1865 to 1914, although some scholars consider an earlier starting date and others extend it to 1926.[4] My project generally focuses on these years, but it slightly widens the scope. I start with the year Harriet Beecher Stowe published *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) because Stowe depicts two iconic southern girls—Eva and Topsy—who are refashioned in children's fiction throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for both anti-southern bias and pro-southern advocacy. After *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, authors tend to represent southern girlhood as an experience relying on codependent definitions of black and white girlhood; what it meant to be a black or white southern girl was contingent on expectations of girls of the other racial identity. In fact, children's books featuring southern girls written prior to 1852 rarely include black girls. Yet by 1920, depictions of black and white southern girls become less intertwined.[5] The nearly 70-year scope of this project, therefore, traces

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[4] The Golden Age was a time when children's literature as a distinct marketing category developed. During this time, children's literature shifted from serving mostly didactic purposes to more imaginative ones. Harvey Darton identifies Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) as the moment when children's literature provided more "liberty of thought," thus beginning the Golden Age (259, 268). Marah Gubar, however, notes that earlier texts, such as Catherine Sinclair's *Holiday House* (1839) and Charlotte Yonge's *The Daisy Chain* (1856), are sometimes included in this period (5). Peter Hunt sees World War I as the conclusion of the Golden Age (59), while Angela Sorby considers *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) as the end date (96).

[5] Fiction about white southern girls written prior to 1852 includes Caroline Gilman's periodical *The Rose Bud; or Youth's Gazette* (1832-1833), *The Cousins: A Tale of Early Life.* (1846) by Maria McIntosh, and *When Are We Happiest? Or, the Little Camerons* (1848) by Louisa Tuthill. The shift away from southern girlhood as a codependent white

how southern girls preserve the same cultural values during the antebellum, Civil War, Reconstruction, and New South eras. Throughout defining moments in southern history and the Golden Age of children's literature, children's authors consistently express unique regional identities for southern girls.

Furthermore, by focusing specifically on pre-1920 texts, I explore how white authors construct southern girls and the South. Prior to this time, black-authored texts about and for southern children were rare. As Rudine Sims Bishop notes, 1920 is a turning point for depictions of black characters in children's literature: in that year, W.E.B. Du Bois began publishing *The Brownies' Book*, which introduces more diverse and less stereotyped portrayals of black children (24, 34). By using texts produced prior to 1920, I examine how southern girls, even black ones, are still used to promote white visions for this region. The white visions vary, as both northern and southern writers produce them for different purposes, and the northern writers tend to be more critical of the South; however, all of these texts express a similar idea of southernness. For example, the majority of texts featuring southern girls take place on plantations or reference plantation culture, which flattens class distinctions and creates an illusion of southerners as either elite or slave. As historians such as Peter Kolchin and John Vlach have found, most slaveholders in the antebellum South were small farmers who did not even live on plantations (Kolchin 101; Vlach 7-8). Yet in focusing on plantations, these texts construct the South as rural—even in suburban or urban areas. In this regard, white children's

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and black experience appears in books such as *Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue in the Sunny South* (1921) by Laura Lee Hope, *Little Missy* (1922) by Maud Lindsay, and *The Pickaninny Twins* (1931) by Lucy Fitch Perkins.

authors make regional distinctions within the South seem less diverse to invest in a white image of the South.

During this time period, a focus on region became prominent in American literature. In the late nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, regionalism emphasized the importance of place, as well as the intricacies of the culture and individuals that place produces. As a subcategory of American realism, regionalist texts depict minute details of landscape and people to emphasize difference. For example, southern regionalist fiction by writers such Thomas Nelson Page and Charles Chesnutt contained meticulous descriptions of plantation mansions and African-American dialect. Regionalism also coincides with the local color movement. According to scholars such as Susan K. Harris, regionalism equates with local writing, yet others such as Judith Fetterley and Marjorie Pryse view regionalism as a distinctly women's tradition and local color as writing by men. In children's literature, however, women and men generally represent region similarly, and for this reason, I refer to regionalism and local color writing interchangeably. For example, Joel Chandler Harris and Louise Clarke Pyrnelle depict similar plantation lifestyles, in terms of the descriptions of the slave quarters, the folklore told by older slaves to white children, and the devotion between masters and slaves. While southern writers called attention to regional distinctiveness prior to the late nineteenth century, the regionalist movement intensified that difference, as well as differences within the South. With their emphasis on local customs and beliefs, the texts I study contribute to this movement. Children's writers use girl characters to express how all age groups—not just adults—shape and are shaped by American regional identities.

In this project, I use the term "southern girl" to refer to a child or young woman who either lives in a southern state or who has at least one parent from a southern state. In both cases, girls grow up in homes depicted as southern because race-based protocols and agrarian codes significantly shape their identities. My analysis also includes girls who grow up outside of the South if they have southern heritage and identify themselves as southern. I consider a southern state to include the eleven states that formed the Confederacy, as well as the border states, such as Kentucky and Maryland, with sections that viewed themselves as southern in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. I examine both children and young unmarried[6] women in literature because writers refer to all of these characters as "girls." In addition, I contend that southern girlhood encompasses both black and white girls, although racial views produce different types of southern girls. In the majority of texts about southern girlhood written in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, authors depict southern girls as either white, middle- to upper-class young ladies or as slaves. Notable exceptions include working-class girls in books by Alice Hegan Rice and a middle-class black girl in *Hazel* (1913) by Mary White Ovington. There are also brief references to Indian girls in books by Francis Robert Goulding and Cajun girls in short stories published in children's periodicals by Kate Chopin. As these exceptions indicate, the southern girl is not a monolithic figure; rather, fictional girls from different socio-economic and racial backgrounds share similar domestic spaces, and these homes shape distinctly southern girlhoods.

Grounding Girlhood in Time and Space

[6] I refer to girls who have never been married, as opposed to young women who are single but have been married, such as Civil War widows.

To understand the distinctly southern features of homes and the experiences of girls in these locations, I employ a feminist historical approach. This methodology allows me to examine what children's literature expresses about southern girlhood in specific historical and cultural moments, as well as to locate those books and characters within the history and culture of the South. Relying on new historicist methods, I view history and literature as belonging to a larger cultural network. Within this network, as Stephen Greenblatt notes, literature is "part of the system of signs that constitutes a given culture" (*Renaissance* n. pag.). In other words, history, literature, and other aspects of culture intersect and inform each other, giving meaning to the components of that cultural matrix. Literature, therefore, is not isolated from social institutions or discourses, or from other forms of artistic or cultural expression; however, literature does not simply reflect these components of the cultural network. Instead, as Greenblatt argues, "the process [of creating art] involves not simply appropriation but exchange" ("Toward" 12). Using this perspective, I explore how children's literature about the South does not merely reflect southern history; it also participates in that culture through crafting models of southern girls that comment on aspects of that history and culture and affect the experiences of girls in the South. In each chapter of this project, therefore, I place literary texts in relation to studies about the South conducted by historians, as well as "nonliterary" documents from the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Diaries, memoirs, songs, pictures, magazines, maps of plantations, and literature all participate in cultural discourse about southern girlhoods during this time period, illuminating how girls experienced southern homes in regionally unique ways.

While investigating the cultural network of southern girlhoods, this project anchors itself in literature and remains focused on the function of that literature. Instead of merely considering these children's books as artifacts embodying the actual conditions of the South, I am more interested in what literary representations of southern antebellum culture invite readers to understand about girlhood. As Greenblatt further points out, literature does more than engage with the culture from which it emerges: it is still a work of art where authors construct characters for the purpose of telling a story (*Renaissance* n. pag.). Thus, children's writers use young female characters to represent southern historical experiences, such as slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the New South, but authors depict these experiences and these girls in certain ways. For instance, to promote antebellum values, authors portray girls only preserving *some* aspects of that culture, or they idealize *some* parts of a plantation lifestyle. Thus, my primary goal is to uncover what narratives these authors are telling about southern girls. To do so, I investigate the traits that authors attribute to southern girls, and I use historical information and artifacts as tools to help identify, understand, and position those qualities within the larger network of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century southern culture.

In addition, I view the connections between history and literature with a feminist lens in order to examine the gender expectations expressed in children's literature. I contextualize children's texts within historical information about southern attitudes toward gender because such contextualization emphasizes "the grounding of gender in time," as Wai-Chee Dimock phrases it (620). Dimock asserts that an attention to historical temporality allows feminist readings "not just to describe or taxonomize difference but also to trace its shifting contexts, modalities, and operative axes" (620).

Contextualizing children's literature within history, therefore, must go beyond describing southern girlhood's unique features to demonstrate how that uniqueness responds to gender expectations in specific historical moments. Indeed, attitudes about gender are not static, and an attention to history can help trace the ways that authors represent changing perceptions about southern girls. In short, "grounding" children's texts "in time" prevents us from universalizing southern girlhood. Authors demonstrate shifting standards according to historical conditions related to class and race; therefore, there are multiple southern girls and girlhoods.

To give further attention to historical specificity and temporality, I use spatial analysis to examine how children's authors represent girls within southern homes. Scholars of spatial theory such as Henri Lefebvre, Doreen Massey, and Linda McDowell have shown that space both produces and is produced by social relations. Children's books illustrate this process, especially with southern homes that shape and are shaped by a distinct set of gender and race relations. My project demonstrates how these books express what Sharon Marcus calls "architectural determinism," which is the "belief that spatial environments determine the social arrangements, daily behaviors, and political status of those who inhabit them" (9). This concept of architectural determinism is helpful in understanding how authors use southern homes to shape the everyday experiences of fictional girls, as well as expectations for how they should behave, what they should believe, and how they should interact with others. In addition, this spatial lens identifies how authors construct different versions of southern girlhoods according to race because, as Massey notes, "the social relations of space are experienced differently and variously interpreted by those holding different positions as part of it" (3). Fictional

black and white girls had contrasting positions in white southern households during this time period, and these domestic spaces help to socialize southern girls into race-based statuses.

These statuses contribute to the unique regional environment of southern homes; therefore, spatial considerations illustrate how domesticity varied by region during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Scholars of history, geography, and architecture have shown that slavery and the postwar social structures that imitated slavery regulated southern homes in distinct ways. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Catherine Clinton, John Vlach, and the contributors to the collection *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation: Architecture and Landscapes of North American Slavery*, edited by Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg, make this argument about antebellum plantations. Similarly, Charles Aiken uses spatial characteristics to connect antebellum, postbellum, and twentieth-century plantations as unique environments.

Spatial features were often connected to the race-based protocols that governed southern homes. Writing mainly about the Jim Crow South, Jennifer Ritterhouse calls these protocols "racial etiquette": they are "the unwritten rules that governed day-to-day interactions across race lines not only as a form of social control but also as a script for the performative creation of culture and of 'race' itself" (4). Yet in a time of slavery *and* institutional segregation, this etiquette was not just unwritten; it also resulted from binding legal principles, which is why I refer to these behaviors as protocols instead of only etiquette. For instance, the legal (and racial) designation of master or slave determined how white and black southerners acted and where they could go within homes. Race also affected the spatial arrangement of southern homes, especially on

plantations, by controlling how southerners structured or located individual buildings, the space between buildings, and items within buildings. In effect, white supremacist codes made domestic spaces and protocols particularly southern.

Drawing upon historical information about the spatial layouts and protocols of southern domestic sites, I identify how children's authors construct distinctly southern girls. A representative example of these southern protocols and spatial arrangements appears in *Miss Li'l' Tweetty* (1917) by Louise Clarke Pyrnelle. Published posthumously, *Miss Li'l' Tweetty* is a plantation novel set in 1845 that depicts the everyday adventures of a girl slaveholder and her girl slave in Alabama.[7] The story follows the girls as they play throughout the plantation, interact with adult slaves, and survive a flood. Though less popular than Pyrnelle's other novel *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot* (1882), *Miss Li'l' Tweetty* provides more insight into how black and white southern girls are defined in opposition to each other. This relationship becomes particularly apparent in the nursery of the plantation house where Tweetty and her slave, Popsy, live. Here, Tweetty sleeps in a "trundle" bed "with her little maid on a comfortable pallet by the side of it" (13). As is typical for southern homes, race dictates the spatial arrangement of the beds by elevating the white girl above the black girl, who must sleep directly on the floor. This sleeping arrangement was common during slavery because, according to Fox-Genovese, slaves were expected to be close by their masters and mistresses at all times in case their assistance was needed (152). Even in sleep, Popsy cannot escape her slave status. Moreover, she must sleep on a makeshift "pallet" instead of an actual piece of furniture

[7] It is unknown when Pyrnelle wrote *Miss Li'l' Tweetty*. In an introductory note to *Miss Li'l' Tweetty*, Pyrnelle indicates that she wrote the book after the publication of *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot* in 1882, so we can assume she wrote it sometime between 1882 and her death in 1907.

like Tweetty. Catherine E. Dean notes that most slave pallets consisted of a "coarse linen tick stuffed with straw or whatever material happened to be available" (54). Occasionally, slaves slept with a single blanket, but pillows were rare (54). Not surprisingly, because of her status as mistress, Tweetty receives better material conditions and belongings. With this spatial layout, therefore, Pyrnelle emphasizes how this household adheres to a racial protocol that privileges whiteness above blackness. For this reason, the nursery is a particularly southern space.

In general, Tweetty and Popsy's time in their nursery and in other indoor domestic spaces is common in children's literature of this time period. Especially during the Golden Age, the home is the central setting in literature for girls, and domestic fiction was virtually synonymous with books for and about girls—especially middle- to upper-class white girls. These books typically contained plots involving family, social class, moral and spiritual topics, and romance. Furthermore, as Claudia Nelson explains about nineteenth-century domestic fiction by authors such as Louisa May Alcott and Frances Hodgson Burnett, these books focused "on the interior, both of the home and of the individual, rather than on outdoor adventure or imperial conquest" (67). In contrast, books for and about boys more commonly showed outdoor travel away from home.[8] Weirholme, Tweetty's plantation, is certainly a domestic setting, and the story primarily concentrates on the everyday concerns within the plantation, including familial relationships between masters and slaves, prayer, behavior lessons for Tweetty, and the lifestyle of the elite.

[8] Typical boys' fiction that featured travel away from the home included works by Oliver Optic, Horatio Alger, and Mark Twain.

However, literature about southern girls complicates the tendency to locate girls in the interior of the home; instead, southern girls occupy both inside *and* outside spaces. In *Miss Li'l' Tweetty,* for example, Tweetty and Popsy are "accustomed to spend most of the day out of doors," and during a long rainstorm, they feel "despondent at the prospect of staying in the house 'all day long'" (41-42). From a practical standpoint, playing outside is cooler than staying indoors in a warm climate—especially before the invention of air conditioning—yet Tweetty's and Popsy's preference for the outside also indicates how Pyrnelle relocates girlhood. While Tweetty and Popsy occasionally play in the nursery, they also spend a large amount of time at the slave quarters, the orchard, the pond, the woods, and the ditch. Pyrnelle represents how children's literature about the South extends domestic sites beyond the physical dimensions of the house to include outdoor areas. In fact, for many southern girls, the outdoors, instead of the indoors, is their central location, which creates a different set of conventional experiences for them. Spatial considerations, therefore, demonstrate how children's authors use indoor and outdoor domestic spaces to shape distinctly regional types of girlhoods.

Intersections Between Gender, Race, Region, and Age

Southern homes, in particular, demonstrate how ideals of gender, race, region, and age intertwine when considering girlhood in children's literature. Although little scholarly work has been done on southern girls in children's literature, my project emphasizes how regional models of girlhood are contingent upon these interrelated factors. In doing so, my project contributes to three related critical conversations: girlhood in children's literature, southern children's literature, and southern womanhood in adult literature.

Primarily, I draw upon the tendency of scholarship about girlhood in children's literature to understand girlhood as a stage of development, as scholars such as Anne Scott MacLeod and Michelle Abate emphasize. Abate, for instance, asserts that female characters experience tomboyish freedoms during childhood but must be "tamed" into feminine convention as they age (31). Similarly, some critics consider how this stage allows young female characters to subvert or conform to gender expectations. For example, Shirley Foster and Judy Simons argue that girls fluctuate between conventional feminine standards in eight classic texts. Likewise, *The Girl's Own: Cultural Histories of the Anglo-American Girl, 1830-1915,* edited by Claudia Nelson and Lynne Vallone, contains essays focusing on different types of British and American girls in children's literature and how standards differ for this "multivocal" girls' culture (2). My project also builds upon scholarship that places fiction for and about girls in relation to the cultures in which girls lived. Many critics, such as Jacqueline Reid-Walsh, situate girls' books alongside material culture, such as dolls and fashion. Critics are also interested in how institutions influence authors' representations of girlhood, as is the focus of Lynne Vallone's *Disciplines of Virtue: Girls' Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, in which she studies the messages about class and sexuality in conduct manuals, religious tracts, and social and legal practices. Finally, critics tend to read books for girls in terms of traditionally "feminine" genres such as domestic or sentimental fiction, as Joe Sutliff Sanders does in his study of how gender influences discipline in stories about orphan girls. While genre impacts the organization of my project, I read texts with a more cultural/historical focus in order to understand regional influences. Girlhood studies typically acknowledge that girls differ based on their class, race, legal

status, religion, and historical era, yet regional variations do not receive extensive attention. By not acknowledging region, we risk universalizing girlhood and overlooking the many girlhoods that have existed and have been constructed in America.

Discussions of southern children's literature give regional distinctions more consideration. In particular, critics such as James Marten, Alice Fahs, and Sarah Law Kennerly generally agree that southern children's works written during the Civil War diverge from northern ones because authors use literature for war propaganda. Even for texts published after the war, Gail Schmunk Murray observes that southern children's literature throughout the nineteenth century advances the Confederacy's political goals and contains stereotyped depictions of race (143-144, 125). Like Murray, most scholars approach southern children's fiction through the topic of race, discussing the racial constructs that authors create. Most notably, Donnarae MacCann sees antislavery literature and plantation fiction advocating white supremacist attitudes, while Paula Connolly charts how children's writers depict slavery in ways that expose and impact American racial politics (MacCann xiii; Connolly 8). Robin Bernstein also argues that representations of childhood innocence develop racial projects ranging from abolition to the Civil Rights movement (4). Similarly, John Scott Wilson notes the racist portrayals of black characters in the Miss Minerva series, although Wilson asserts that the series shows more ambivalence about race in books published in the 1920s and 1930s (73). More recently, Joyce E. Kelley reassesses the southern ideologies promoted in children's works by Louise Clarke Pyrnelle: Kelley contends that Pyrnelle's novels, *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot* and *Miss Li'l' Tweetty* "mimic, test, rewrite, and even challenge the rigidity of the slave system" (142). These works provide insight into the racial complexities of

children's lives in the antebellum and postbellum South, but my project extends these discussions to focus on gender in southern children's literature. Occasionally, scholars include southern girls in studies about non-southern topics, such as Carolyn Carpan's examination of Elsie Dinsmore as the "idealized, romantic Victorian child" (1); however, scholarship like Carpan's does not address the impact of regional identity on gender expectations for southern girls, which I do through examining intersections between race and gender in southern childhood.

On the other hand, regional identity and the ways in which race and gender intertwine are prominent topics in critical work about southern womanhood in adult literature. Concerning texts written in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, scholars typically examine the ways that racial attitudes influence different conceptions of white and black southern womanhood. For instance, Kimberly Wallace-Sanders asserts that the mammy figure is "crucial to our understanding" of race, gender, motherhood, and southern nostalgia (3). Kathryn Lee Seidel also contends that race and gender impact constructions of the southern belle in fiction (147). Critics such as Hazel Carby and Sherita Johnson have also shown how southern womanhood is traditionally equated with whiteness but that definition needs expansion, particularly because black women writers made important contributions to the South's social history. Expressing the tensions between race and gender, scholars also examine the relationships between white and black female characters, analyzing their differences but also viewing these women as a community, which is a central theme in criticism about southern women. As Minrose Gwin finds, interactions between white and black women represent "the central ambiguity of southern racial experience": these women share strong bonds, but one is the

oppressor who causes suffering for the other (4). In addition to that on race, a wealth of criticism exists on the "myth of the southern woman" and how authors depicted this figure before, during, and after the Civil War. As Anne Goodwyn Jones argues in her foundational book *Tomorrow is Another Day*, the idealized myth of the fragile, pure white southern woman is a paradox that authors contest (4, 39). More recently, however, critics discuss how writers deconstruct this myth in specific genres and time periods, such as Elizabeth Moss' focus on antebellum southern domestic fiction or Jane Turner Censer's examination of political themes in postbellum writing by elite white women of the Upper South. As this scholarship indicates, adult literature presents southern womanhood as a fluid category, which informs my reading of southern girlhood as varied. I show how girlhood, like womanhood, includes both black and white individuals, and girlhood shifts according to historical and cultural moments.

In addition to adult women, there are studies of southern girls in adult fiction that explore the obstacles young females encounter while growing up. The majority of these discussions center around contemporary fiction, such as Laura Fine's analysis of how girls experience gender and sexual confusion in Carson McCullers' *The Member of the Wedding,* Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina.* Likewise, Caren J. Town argues that southern girls in twelve contemporary works overcome challenges to become "competent, resilient, and independent" (18). Although my dissertation includes girls who experience similar conditions and traits as those noted by Town and Fine, I focus exclusively on children's literature to consider how children's texts try to influence child readers. Unlike adult readers, child readers have yet to grow up. Children's literature about and for girls suggests girls need to

conform to certain models of girlhood in order to become the types of women their societies expect of them. This concept is particularly important to consider when books promote racist visions of girlhood—and when the books' prefaces encourage readers to follow the examples set forth by the characters, as many texts in this project contain. When white authors present white child readers with white models of southern girlhood, there is the possibility white girls will carry these racist values as they age, perhaps even passing them to their own children. In short, fictional southern girlhoods do not only have historical or literary significance, but they also have value for cultural and ideological purposes. Fictional girls are protectors of a racist system created by white adults, preserving those values in the imaginary worlds of the stories but also attempting to preserve them in reality.

Girl Protectors

When writing for a younger audience and privileging the experiences of children, authors tend to complicate southern views about protection that were prevalent during this time period. Generally, historians such as Bertram Wyatt Brown, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, and Laura Edwards have found that southern society in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries regarded adult men as protectors. More specifically, protectiveness was a trait of adult white men. After all, this society glorified southern men as Confederate soldiers who marched into battles to keep their wives, children, and slaves "safe" from the North. Historical evidence also suggests that some young women embraced this gendered expectation of men. In a letter written in 1867, Mary Francis Page expressed her desire to marry a man who could be "a protector to love & guide me" (qtd. in Jabour, *Scarlett's Sisters* 170). The correlation between southern white

masculinity and protection continued into the twentieth century, especially when white male southerners justified lynchings by claiming that they were shielding white women and girls from the sexual advances of black men. In her study of these lynchings, Kristina DuRocher notes, "white southerners taught their daughters to…conduct themselves as the passive, protected assets of white males" (5). Southern girls, therefore, have been traditionally regarded as vulnerable individuals in need of adult defense, while protection was defined as white men ensuring safety through physical, military, or violent actions.

However, when we consider domestic spaces, the role of protector is not limited to one gender. Critics such as Elizabeth Moss and Kimberly Harrison have observed how southern women writers during the antebellum and postbellum eras represent women as protectors of the home. As Moss demonstrates with antebellum women's domestic fiction and Harrison shows with Civil War diaries, women and men defend the home in different ways specific to their gender. Women use their roles as wives and mothers to exert moral, emotional, and spiritual security over their homes and its inhabitants. Indeed, through the act of writing, as Moss notes, women "mounted a domestic defense" of southern cultural values, including those supporting slavery (2). Furthermore, women's literature suggests that providing protection is not exclusively a white trait. Black women such as Harriet Jacobs in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* protect their own children, and mammies in books from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to *Gone With the Wind* protect white children, sometimes at the cost of not shielding their own children from harm. Mammies ensure white children are fed and clothed, thus caring for their material conditions, and they provide emotional comfort and moral lessons. In short, writers show how many types of

protection from different individuals are necessary to preserve southern beliefs and lifestyles.

Age also needs to be a factor when considering types of protection, especially when we place the actual experiences of southern girls alongside literary representations of them. In some historical accounts, girls are not passive receivers of protection; they are the protectors. In fact, physical or military protection was occasionally associated with southern girls instead of adult men. For example, during the 1890s and early twentieth century at Carr-Burdette College in Sherman, Texas, girls joined a group called the Carr-Burdette Rifles for which they donned Confederate uniforms and practiced military drills (Figure 1). As an advertisement in the *Confederate Veteran* magazine reports, the girls learned "regulation army tactics" and attended the reunion of the United Confederate Veterans in New Orleans ("The Carr-Burdette" 376). Though these girls provide a performance instead of actually shielding southerners from physical harm, they still indicate that girls acquired the abilities to defend their region through violent, military actions, if the need should ever arise. Indeed, these efforts are so important that the girls cross gender and age boundaries, aligning with adult male veterans at memorial events. However, these girls do not completely abandon the features of youth and femininity, as the ankle-length skirts in the picture indicate.[9] Although not wearing the pants of male uniforms, they are still capable of executing similar tasks. These girls, therefore, express

[9] According to Jo Paoletti, girls in the late-nineteenth century began to wear floor-length skirts at age fourteen or fifteen (128). Because the Carr-Burdette girls wear ankle-length skirts, they could be younger or close to those ages. However, their dresses could also be shorter to provide more flexibility in movement as the girls practice and perform their drills.

how methods of southern protection vary according to gender, even when girls engage in physical actions traditionally regarded as masculine.

Figure 1. Advertisement for the Carr-Burdette Rifles in the *Confederate Veteran.* From "Carr-Burdette College," *Confederate Veteran* 11.8 (1903): 379. Courtesy McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi.

The Carr-Burdette Rifles provides insight into the different types of protection that southern girls provide in children's literature. As with a military group, protection in the literature I study is defensive and functions to ward off various threats. The abolitionist texts fear emancipated slaves becoming powerful in white society, while postwar southern texts fear losing a society governed by white superiority. To combat these threats, fictional southern girls, both black and white, protect tangible entities, such as people or houses, in active ways. While white girls have more of a choice, black girls are forced to be protectors. To emphasize their restrictions, the texts show black girls as more limited in what they protect. For example, slave nurses who are girls only protect

white children from harm, but white girls protect their families, friends, and slaves. Indeed, white girls also protect slave girls from more intangible entities like sin by educating them about spirituality. Unlike the Carr-Burdette Rifles, fictional girls more commonly protect through "feminine" methods, such as providing emotional care through nursing, but children's authors show these efforts are as valuable as the more aggressive, violent defenses provided by men. Sometimes, fictional girls protect the Old South more effectively than women, men, or boys. Southern children's literature suggests that adult white women are weak and incapable of protecting their homes, especially since most adult white women are absent or dead in these stories. Mammies are more visible, but authors depict adult black women as too comical to make serious or valuable contributions to anything. Ultimately, as with the Carr-Burdette girls, southern girls challenge the notion that only adult men can be protectors, but this protection still reinforces white supremacist hierarchies.

In addition, protection involves acts of preservation for more intangible, ideological values. For instance, the Carr-Burdette Rifles preserve cultural values classified as southern: they perpetuate a Confederate image of the South forty years after the fall of the Confederacy and celebrate that secessionist identity. Likewise, through their protection, black and white southern girl characters preserve ideologies pertaining to white supremacy and agrarianism. Following scholars such as George M. Frederickson and Donnarae MacCann, I use "white supremacy" instead of "racism" because it more specifically identifies what type of racism occurs in these texts. As Frederickson explains, "white supremacy refers to the attitudes, ideologies, and policies associated with the rise of blatant forms of white or European dominance over 'nonwhite' populations" (xi).

Relegating blackness as inferior, white supremacy involves both racial bias, such as privileging whites in everyday interactions, and institutional racism, such as slavery or segregation. In these stories, girls do not merely learn about white supremacist values they should embrace as they grow up; rather, they enforce these values during their childhood. As girl characters preserve the white South, the texts also perform the work of preservation by constructing and advancing white supremacism for child readers.

Agrarian values are also an important part of the system children's authors use southern girls to preserve. I use the term agrarian when writers are promoting and romanticizing rural, agricultural landscapes in ways that make those sites distinct to the South. This agrarian ideal originated with Thomas Jefferson in *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787) and was most notably promoted by the Nashville Agrarians in the 1930s. In the antebellum period, southerners believed that agrarian lifestyles provided a greater sense of independence for those in the white planter class, and it was more rewarding in terms of morality, spirituality, and health, especially in contrast with industrial work in northern cities. As John Beck, Wendy Frandsen, and Aaron Randall point out, "farming was not merely a way to survive, it was the best way to live" (8). Additionally, agrarianism relies on the pastoral tradition's emphasis on the natural world (such as woods and gardens). As Lucinda MacKethan has argued, southern writers used pastoral imagery to evoke memories of the past and "to envision that simpler locale from the vantage point of inevitable loss and removal" ("Genres" n. pag.). In other words, the pastoral tradition allowed writers to address the threat of losing these agrarian lifestyles and values, especially in the postwar period. A fear of loss was especially prominent as Civil War battles ruined natural landscapes, as the war threatened to end the current

agricultural system, and as emancipation reorganized that system. However, agrarianism is particularly southern in these texts—and more than just pastoral—because rural, agricultural landscapes are used for white supremacist purposes. In contrast with rural areas in other parts of the country, white southerners believed that agrarian landscapes could help them develop and maintain race relations according to a system of white superiority. Racial and agrarian values are therefore intertwined in the texts examined in this project.

For example, in *Miss Li'l' Tweetty*, Popsy and Tweetty preserve white supremacist and agrarian values when they play in a ditch on their plantation. One afternoon, the girls pretend their paper dolls are travelling down the Mississippi River. Though Tweetty previously was "sobbing and crying" over the deaths of her cats, spending time at the ditch "brightened up" her mood (143). Tweetty's response preserves agrarian values by suggesting rural, outdoor locations can provide a rewarding childhood. Here, the ditch renews Tweetty's emotional health. Unlike Tweetty, Popsy is forced to play at the ditch because she is a slave, but the emphasis on play suggests slaveholding and slave girls enjoy these outdoor games together. A book like *Miss Li'l' Tweetty* suggests this white supremacist system is beneficial for both girls.

Pyrnelle's emphasis on play identifies a key difference between southern girls and adult women, especially in contrast with adult women's literature from this era. Girls protect the South through their leisure time. In contrast, Caroline Gilman's *Recollections of a Southern Matron* (1838) emphasizes how adult white women are constantly working in southern homes:

> She is obliged to listen to cases of grievance, is a nurse to the sick, and distributes the half-yearly clothing; indeed, the mere giving out of thread and needles is something of a charge on so large a scale. A planter's lady may seem indolent, because there are so many under her who perform trivial services; but the very circumstance of keeping so many menials in order is an arduous one, and the keys of her establishment are a care of which a Northern housekeeper knows nothing, and include a very extensive class of duties. (47-48)

Drawing attention to how white women view their slaveholding responsibilities as "arduous," Gilman opposes antebellum critiques of slavery that insisted the system created laziness in the slaveholders. According to Gilman, though, white mistresses remained busy with nursing and managerial "duties." Children's literature shows white girls completing similar tasks, but children's literature also focuses on play, demonstrating how girls—both black and white—are effective protectors through leisure activities. Children's texts also privilege the spaces for play that are separate from adult spaces, such as the nursery, the yard, or the woods. The emphasis on play leads to a stronger focus on outdoor areas, and girls, more so than adult women, are depicted protecting the South through outdoor activities.

The mixture of work and play in the outdoors is a central component of what makes girlhood southern, according to children's writers, because it results from the racial dynamics of southern homes. In this project, I use the term "work" to refer to various types of labor, including agricultural, economic, domestic, managerial, and spiritual. For instance, work for white girls could involve sewing socks for Confederate

soldiers or supervising her slaves. In contrast to more passive managerial labor, work for slave girls is substantially more arduous and demeaning than the work done by white girls. It involves following directions—no matter if they are trite or potentially destructive—and being forced to complete these tasks. For this reason, playing with child slaveholders is considered work for slave girls. As girl characters complete different forms of labor, the texts also perform what Jane Tompkins has termed "cultural work" as they represent and promote the white supremacist system of the nineteenth-century South (200). This cultural work occurs as the books attempt to preserve southern ideologies for white readers.

Miss Li'l' Tweetty particularly illustrates these types of work. First, Pyrnelle depicts how slave/slaveholding labor and play combine during girlhood. When the girls play at the ditch, their paper dolls' boat capsizes, but Popsy is the one who must run after the dolls and try to fish them out with a pole (144). Tweetty only watches because her mammy has instructed her to keep her clothes from getting "tored up an' dutty" (145). Popsy thus enables Tweetty to maintain an elevated status through an appearance of cleanliness. This effort is temporary, however, and both girls ultimately fall into the ditch. Here, once again, Popsy fulfills her job as a slave: she rescues Tweetty by climbing onto a tree branch and helping to pull Tweetty onto the branch (148). Tweetty "laughed out merrily" as Popsy grabs onto the tree branch and goes "flying through the air" (147). This scene illustrates how slave and slaveholding girls engage in different types of work. Tweetty completes more passive managerial labor as she watches to ensure Popsy does her job properly and she laughs to encourage Popsy's efforts. Popsy, on the other hand, completes more physically demanding labor and risks injuring herself. Though

delineating these jobs, the text uses Tweetty's laughter to imply that both types of work are enjoyable. Popsy's movements on the tree strengthen that message, and her actions turn the rescue attempt into a game or makeshift show. Playing, then, does cultural work by suggesting that southern homes enable fun forms of work for both slave and slaveholding girls. As a result, the girls reinforce a system where blackness entails laboring for the comforts of masters and whiteness entails monitoring and encouraging that labor.

Popsy also represents how white children's authors construct black girls as protectors, as they care for white children and as they preserve Old South lifestyles. Adult literature by black women such as Harriet Jacobs, Frances Harper, and Anna Julia Cooper typically suggests that black girls and women challenge these values, if not through actions then through their private beliefs; however, children's texts depict southern black girls maintaining white supremacist codes. Like adult mammies, girl slaves privilege white superiority by protecting the physical wellbeing of their white masters and mistresses. In *Miss Li'l' Tweetty*, Popsy ensures Tweetty's safety when she and Tweetty fall into the ditch. After some time in the water, they worry they could fall ill from staying wet so long. Popsy explains, "Mammy say hits a mighty bad sign futter git wet in de summer-time. An' yo' know Mahs' little Fred got wet dat time w'at he fell in de rib'r, an' hit gunt him de 'horrid-forrid feber,' an' he come pow'ful nigh dyin'" (149). These reminders of fever and death indicate that falling in the ditch poses a real danger. When Popsy fulfills the duties of a slave and retrieves Tweetty from the ditch, she improves her mistress' health and happiness. Popsy enables Tweetty to continue enjoying her childhood on this plantation, and she saves herself so that she can continue serving

Tweetty. Although this example demonstrates how girl slaves protect in ways that are similar to adult mammies, it also shows how girls act as protectors in more locations than adults. At the ditch on the outskirts of Tweetty's plantation, for example, adults are not present. Tweetty's parents and her adult mammy cannot help her—only Popsy can. Girl slaves are not confined to the nursery, kitchen, or slave cabins as many adult female slaves are; instead, they have more spatial mobility, especially in outdoor areas. These spatial considerations give insight into the ways southern black girls guard their home, its inhabitants, and its values in a wider domestic arena.

Through the relationship between white and black girls like Tweetty and Popsy, children's writers construct whiteness as receiving servitude, and blackness as offering it, both of which rely on each other. In other words, authors typically define southern girls in relation to their white or black counterparts, often pairing girls from different races as companions. As in the example with the girls' sleeping arrangements, Tweetty can only inhabit a higher status if there is someone else to sleep on the floor beside her and fill a lower status. As a result, Pyrnelle's book represents how children's writers commonly define white and black southern girlhood as codependent experiences. These girlhoods are not equal, and Tweetty's trundle is certainly more comfortable than the floor. However, because the girls share a room and Popsy is not relegated to the slave quarters, Pyrnelle emphasizes how the girls remain linked. While not all books in this project contain biracial pairs, this codependent bond is a common feature in abolitionist literature, postbellum plantation fiction, and family stories. Furthermore, this pairing constructs southern girlhood as either white or black, excluding other races and ethnicities such as Native Americans.

The codependent experience of black and white girlhood makes literary depictions of southern girlhood unique. Through their interracial *and* intergenerational bond, southern girls differ from southern boys, northern girls, and frontier girls. In nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century American children's literature, authors link southern boys with older adult slaves—such as the characters in Joel Chandler Harris' Uncle Remus stories or Huck Finn and Jim—or boys interact with boys of the same race—such as Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn or the boys in Thomas Nelson Page's *Two Little Confederates* (1888). Likewise, girls in northern or frontier literature typically have female friends who are of similar class and racial backgrounds. Many of these girls are sisters— such as the March girls in *Little Women* (1868)—but many are not—such as Rebecca Randall and Emma Jane Perkins in *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1903) or Elnora Comstock and her school friends in *A Girl of the Limberlost* (1909). However, children's literature about the South shows how the racial protocol of this region leads girls to form more racially diverse attachments. Although southern girls appear to enjoy each other's company, these pairs are not necessarily friends, especially because the social system forces them to spend time together. Typical friendships between girls of similar class and racial backgrounds help the girls learn empathy or learn to provide mutual support for each other; however, friendship between black and white southern girls helps them to learn their statuses in the South's racial hierarchy. This pairing creates a dynamic where southern girls simultaneously work and play. Frontier girls, especially those in books written later but set in the mid- to late nineteenth century such as *Little House on the Prairie* (1935) or *Caddie Woodlawn* (1935), primarily play outside, while the codependent bond between southern girls emphasizes that the outdoors is also a site

for work. As mistresses and servants, southern girls are becoming conditioned and conditioning each other into this system.

In the four categories of literature examined in this project, young female characters suggest to child readers that protecting the Old South is a mission for all individuals—not just adult white men. To identify the assorted gendered and age-specific types of protection that girls provide, each chapter examines several representative texts to pinpoint trends in that type of children's literature. Chapter II begins with abolitionist literature, which contains some of the few nineteenth-century children's texts that represent both black and white child characters as central figures of the stories. I use Eva and Topsy in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) as a starting point because they establish the trend for authors to define black and white southern girlhood as a codependent bond. Then, I demonstrate how writers in the 1850s and early 1860s reinforce, critique, and expand upon Stowe's depictions of these characters. This chapter discusses two adaptations of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* specifically marketed to children: *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853) by Stowe and *A Peep into Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853) by "Aunt Mary." In addition, I examine southern girls in three other abolitionist texts: *Gertrude Lee; or the Northern Cousin* (1856) by M.A.F., *The Earnest Laborer; or Myrtle Hill Plantation* (1864) by the American Sunday School Union, and *Step by Step; or Tidy's Way to Freedom* (1862) by the American Tract Society. In this chapter, I discuss what options girls had for spatial mobility in slaveholding households, focusing specifically on movements between inside and outside areas. Through examining the movements of southern girls in these households, I argue that children's abolitionist writers preserve the racial hierarchies that are central to the success of the

slave institution. In all of these books, white southern girls are abolitionist activists: they protect slaves by becoming like guardian angels and using Christian principles to shield slaves from the traumas of slavery. Yet white girls are the only ones who become activists and protectors. Ultimately, these racialized constructions of southern girlhoods protect proslavery domestic protocols.

Abolitionism leads white girls to protect southern values in Chapter II, and Chapter III addresses how the Civil War and creation of the Confederacy enable white girls to enact a similar mission. Chapter III focuses on Confederate children's literature, which includes texts published from the point of secession through the immediate post-Civil War years. Although some abolitionist and plantation fiction appear during this time period, I do not include them in this chapter because they do not represent the trend for Confederate literature to both promote southern political goals and acknowledge the Confederacy and its national literature as "possibilities, not merely lost causes," as Coleman Hutchison defines these texts (2). Because of this political agenda, Confederate children's literature creates regional identities that function as war propaganda; therefore, these texts are ideally suited for this project in that they define those regional identities and express what qualities will help southern girls contribute to their nation and the war effort.

Chapter III draws upon three texts that represent the main types of children's literature produced in the Confederacy: recreational books, periodicals, and textbooks. Published by an anonymous author/editor called "Uncle Buddy," *Uncle Buddy's Gift Book for the Holidays* (1863) is a collection of children's stories, poems, academic lessons, and directions for games. *The Third Reader, Designed for the Use of Primary*

Schools (1864) is the third installment in a textbook series by Adelaide De Vendel Chaudron. Finally, *Ellen Hunter: A Story of the War* (1868) by Byrd Lyttle is a book-length story that was serialized in the children's periodical *Burke's Weekly for Boys and Girls*. To contextualize these literary works within their wartime culture, I use historical information to show how the spatial boundaries between home front and front lines collapsed in the South during the Civil War. Confederate children's literature, however, maintains the distinction between these two war zones. Indeed, girls are responsible for keeping these areas separate, and I argue that girls are more effective than adults in protecting the southern home front. Rather than fighting the war through military service like the boys or men, girls fight through domestic service, which is crucial for the success of the Confederacy as a country and a national identity.

Chapter II and III discusses some stories set on plantations, but Chapter IV focuses more exclusively on that setting in postbellum plantation fiction written for children. Although books by southern writers about plantation lifestyles existed prior to the Civil War, Chapter IV examines postwar novels to illustrate how authors use young female characters to idealize visions of antebellum homes. In fact, postbellum plantation fiction presents a more fantasized version of this setting than the texts discussed in Chapters II and III. This chapter examines girls in the highly popular Elsie Dinsmore series (1867-1905) by Martha Finley, Louise Clarke Pyrnelle's *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot* (1882), and the six-book series by Joel Chandler Harris beginning with *Little Mr. Thimblefinger and His Queer Company: What the Children Saw and Heard There* (1894) and concluding with *Wally Wanderoon and His Story-telling Machine* (1903). Plantations appear in abolitionist and Confederate literature, but Chapter IV focuses more exclusively

on the outdoor areas of plantations. I place these texts in relation to historical information concerning the spatial arrangement and protocols of outdoor sites, demonstrating how these authors extend domestic space to include the entire property of the plantation beyond the main house. I argue that southern girls in this genre protect the plantation—and the antebellum past—through maintaining racial hierarchies and promoting an agrarian lifestyle. Through these representations, Finley, Pyrnelle, and Harris reconfigure literary trends concerning girl friendship and girls' association with indoor spaces. This reconceptualization of girlhood suggests that southern girls can keep white supremacist lifestyles from becoming a "lost cause" when they feminize outdoor plantation spaces.

Chapter V continues to look at postwar books by focusing on family stories set in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but it offers a variation on the homes depicted in abolitionist, Confederate, and plantation literature. Family stories reproduce characteristics of plantation domestic sites, though set in other types of homes. This chapter considers a town in The Little Colonel series (1895-1912) by Annie Fellows Johnston. I also examine a working-class urban slum in two books by Alice Hegan Rice: *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* (1901) and its sequel *Lovey Mary* (1903). Lastly, I use a black tenant-farming community in *Hazel* (1913) by Mary White Ovington, which is one of the first children's books about a middle-class black girl. Using historical information about early-twentieth-century towns, cities, and tenant farms, I demonstrate how these writers represent all of these domestic sites with spatial layouts and protocols similar to those of a plantation. By considering the movement of girls in these locations, I argue that Johnston, Rice, and Ovington construct southern girlhood as an experience that protects plantation domestic structures and perpetuates their existence beyond actual

plantations. As a genre where girls act as moral guides for their relatives, family stories underscores the power of southern girls, regardless of race or class, to keep their families connected to the physical space of the plantation, its racial protocol, and its agrarian values.

Finally, I conclude with a coda that gestures towards shifting representations of southern girls in the twentieth century, as demonstrated in early-twentieth-century girls' series fiction. Since these books were extremely popular at this time, they contain more southern girls than other types of children's books written in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Three books, in particular, suggest that fictional southern girls begin to question their regional identities: *The Blossom Shop: A Story of the South* (1913) by Isla May Mullins; *Madge Morton: Captain of the Merry Maid* (1914) by Amy D.V. Chalmers; and *Ruth Fielding Down in Dixie or Great Times in the Land of Cotton* (1916) by Alice B. Emerson. These books were written and read at a time when legalized segregation was a central force affecting southern society, and this "culture of segregation," as Grace Elizabeth Hale terms it, provides insight into the new ways girls experienced southern homes in the early twentieth century (92). The young female characters in these books diverge from the racial and agrarian patterns in abolitionist, Confederate, plantation, and family stories. Examining how southern girlhood in children's literature becomes less distinct in series fiction, I consider how authors express a tension between national and regional definitions of girlhood but also call attention to what made southern girlhood distinct in earlier books.

Through considering southern girls, their movement within domestic spaces, and their roles as protectors of the antebellum South, my dissertation demonstrates how

girlhood is a category that varies according to region. With its racial complexities, the South particularly expresses how girlhood is not a monolithic designation. Indeed, even within the South, gender classifications are unstable. As Susan Donaldson and Anne Goodwyn Jones note, "looking at the region through the lens of gender reveals a South uneasily balancing polarized stereotypes of manhood and womanhood" (16). Yet as these children's books suggest, the barrier between womanhood and girlhood, and adulthood and childhood, is also unbalanced. Authors show girls negotiating between these boundaries as they work to preserve their homes, their families, and their regional identities. What is less flexible, however, is the distinction between region and nation. Authors invite child readers to imagine fictional—and not-so-fictional—worlds where regional identities remain stable through the efforts of girls.

CHAPTER II

GUARDIAN ANGELS: GIRL PROTECTION AND THE SLAVEHOLDING HOUSEHOLD IN CHILDREN'S ABOLITIONIST LITERATURE

In the antebellum South, slavery produced a unique experience of girlhood for both white and black young people, especially since the institution permitted a girl of one race to legally own a girl of another race. At twelve-years-old, for instance, Harriet Jacobs became the property of a three-year-old white girl. Writing about this dynamic in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), Jacobs expresses how it makes slave girls particularly vulnerable to mistreatment. Because of her youth, the child slaveholder cannot manage Jacobs' treatment, and the parents of this white child send Jacobs walking barefoot through the snow and wrongly accuse her of lying, among other abuses (20). Jacobs explains, "My young mistress was still a child, and I could look for no protection from her" (20). Jacobs and her young mistress experience two different types of girlhoods that separate along racial lines. Enslaved black girls are unprotected property, subject to whatever mistreatment their white masters dictate. White slaveholding girls own slaves, but they must surrender their property to the power of their parents. In this specific incident, Jacobs suggests that both white and black girls are unable to influence or change the slave system. For these two individuals and for many others who lived in the antebellum era, southern girlhood was an experience structured by adults, by the slave system, and by power hierarchies based on racial difference.

Prior to and during the Civil War, abolitionist activists and writers protested the system that created abusive and dehumanizing treatment like the kind Harriet Jacobs experienced. Unlike the vulnerable slave girl and ineffectual white girl in *Incidents in the*

Life of a Slave Girl, however, abolitionist literature written for and marketed to children depicts girls with substantially more agency. Both enslaved and slaveholding fictional girls create change within this system. Some of the most notable children from this literary category are Eva and Topsy from Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), as well as the children's adaptations *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853) by Stowe and *A Peep into Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853) by an anonymous writer called Aunt Mary.[10] Harriet Jacobs' girl mistress cannot protect her, but Eva is an abolitionist who protects the slaves better than anyone else, with the exception of God. She is "Uncle Tom's Guardian Angel," as a popular song of the era declares.[11] From Tom to Topsy to her mammy, Eva offers both spiritual protection by teaching slaves about the Bible and material protection by keeping slaves from enduring abusive conditions. As the song declares, Eva brings "light" and "peace" (Stowe, *Pictures* 32). She uses Christian faith and love as defensive shields against the horrors of slavery, manipulating the system in an attempt to exert more control over herself and her slaves.

Following the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852, southern white girls like Eva became prominent figures in abolitionist children's literature. On both sides of the Atlantic, children's writers produced literature with antislavery sentiments throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in periodicals, poems, Sunday school books, alphabet books, and novels. Prior to the 1850s, as Deborah De Rosa has argued, authors depicted girls understanding that slavery is wrong, while boys were the main

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[10] "Aunt Mary" may have been the daughter of the book's London publisher, Sampson Low ("*Uncle Tom* as Children's Book").

[11] "Uncle Tom's Guardian Angel" is the subtitle to "Little Eva Song," a song with words by John Greenleaf Whittier and music by Manuel Emilio. The song appeared in *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and on advertisements by John P. Jewett, Stowe's first American publisher.

activists going beyond understanding and changing the conditions of slaves (11).[12] After the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, however, American children's writers crafted stories where girls—particularly southern girls—became the primary agents advancing the abolitionist cause. Other young female characters join Eva in assuming the role of a guardian angel for their slaves.

This chapter examines six books that depict southern girls, both black and white, as central participants in the national debate over slavery. I use Eva and Topsy in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) as a starting point because they establish a repeated trope in representations of southern girls: a white girl and a black girl defined in opposition to each other. Though Stowe considered children part of the original audience for *Uncle Tom's Cabin,*[13] this chapter also discusses the two children's adaptations from this era, *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853) and *A Peep into Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853). Both children's versions are shorter than the original novel, omitting plots with sexual undertones, parts that focus heavily on adult characters, and sections that address an adult audience; however, they follow the basic plot of Stowe's original book, especially regarding Eva's and Tom's stories. *Pictures and Stories* is the shorter of the two and alternates between prose and poetry. In addition, I examine southern girls in three other abolitionist books that were published by organizations that printed religious and moral stories to improve societal problems. Published by the

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[12] Examples of these boy-centric texts include *The Liberty Cap* (1846) by Eliza Follen, *The Young Abolitionists; or, Conversations on Slavery* (1848) by Jane Elizabeth Jones, and *Cousin Ann's Stories for Children* (1849) by Ann Preston.

[13] While the final chapter of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* specifically addresses northern Christian women as the audience, Stowe's first audience was her own children, and in the original serialized version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* Stowe acknowledges the "dear little children who have followed her story" (qtd. in "*Uncle Tom* as Children's Book").

American Reform Tract and Book Society, *Gertrude Lee; or the Northern Cousin* (1856) by M.A.F. depicts a twelve-year-old girl spending a year on her grandparents' plantation in South Carolina. Raised in Connecticut but with a southern heritage, Gertrude convinces her grandparents and cousins to emancipate their slaves, and Gertrude's whole family moves to Connecticut. In *Step by Step; or Tidy's Way to Freedom* (1862) by the American Tract Society, a mixed-race slave girl endures a series of different masters and mistresses, both benevolent and abusive, as she grows up. Tidy's Christian faith sustains her until she is ultimately freed in her early adulthood. Finally, in *The Earnest Laborer; or Myrtle Hill Plantation* (1864) by the American Sunday School Union, an abolitionist schoolteacher named George Freeman moves to a Mississippi plantation and impresses the evils of slavery upon his white students, who are the four children of the plantation owner. He particularly inspires one of the daughters, Gelia, to become an abolitionist activist. All of these girls try to improve the material, emotional, spiritual, and educational conditions of slaves, but Gelia is the only one who does not actively try to free slaves. Advocating emancipation and improving conditions are different kinds of abolitionism, but these books suggest that girls could protest slavery in a range of ways.

While a wealth of scholarship exists on *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and almost no critical work has been done on the other three books, all of these texts together provide insight into how domestic spaces particular to region shape how southern abolitionist girls impact the slave system.[14] This chapter investigates southern girlhood by using historical

[14] One exception is Deborah De Rosa, who discusses *Gertrude Lee* alongside *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. De Rosa asserts that both books show girl abolitionists crossing gender boundaries and impacting the public realm through political activism (11). I also see girls engaging with public discourse, but my argument focuses more on how they do so in private, domestic settings and how it impacts racial boundaries.

accounts about the structures and protocols of slaveholding households, as well as the contributions of girls in those environments. Though denigrating the slave system, these books still represent and even promote distinctly southern domestic spaces that adhere to white supremacist protocols. In these homes, racial codes privileging whiteness and denigrating blackness affected spatial layouts and rules of etiquette, both of which impacted how girls moved, behaved, and interacted with others.

Through examining the movements of fictional southern girls in these households, as well as what that movement signified in the 1850s and 1860s, I argue that children's abolitionist writers position girls as the protectors of racial hierarchies that are central to the success of the slave institution. In all of these books, white southern girls use proslavery methods to implement abolitionism. They protect slaves by becoming like guardian angels and using Christian principles to shield slaves from the traumas of slavery. Yet white girls are the only girls who become protectors of other individuals. Authors represent white girls as angels, saviors, teachers, and slaveholders, while black girls are heathens, sinners, students, and slaves. Finally, I demonstrate how *Step by Step* uses a mixed-race girl to complicate but still reinforce this division. All six of these texts are written by northern writers who are attempting to be critical of the South, yet these northern visions of southern girlhoods promote experiences advocated by slaveholders.[15] Ultimately, this construction of girlhood suggests that southern girls should uphold proslavery domestic protocols, even when working to end slavery.

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[15] In *Gertrude Lee,* M. A. F. is anonymous, but a preface written by M. A. F. notes that she wrote it in Troy, New York (vi). While the authors of *The Earnest Laborer* and *Step by Step* are anonymous, their publishing companies were located in New England and often printed northern writers, so I am assuming the writers were northern.

During the antebellum period, children's antislavery writing was a popular type of children's literature, appearing in magazines, poems, and books. Many writers, such as Lydia Maria Child and Harriet Beecher Stowe, produced antislavery texts for both adults and children; however, adult antislavery writing contained both black- and white-authored texts (such as slave narratives), while abolitionist children's works were mostly white-authored.[16] Abolitionist literature for child and adult readers also shared the same goal: to support emancipation. Yet writers advanced this objective with varying intensity, often disagreeing over when and how emancipation should occur. As Paula Connolly points out, children's abolitionist literature separates into three categories: radical, moderate, and conservative. Moderate and conservative texts published by more mainstream presses implied that slavery provided some benefits, such as caring for the material needs of slaves, and they did not promote emancipation as an immediate need. In contrast, abolitionist organizations and presses typically published radical texts that condemned most aspects of slavery. Radical texts showed children understanding the injustice of the slave system or sympathizing with the plight of slaves. Additionally, radical texts advocated the child's participation in liberation (Connolly 13-15, 34-41). For these reasons, the books examined in this chapter fall into the radical category, showing how girl characters in particular become antislavery activists and assist with emancipation. Indeed, children's texts, more so than the ones intended only for adults,

[16] The black-authored slave narrative, for instance, is not common among antebellum children's literature, which aligns with the trend of nineteenth-century children's literature to be mostly white-authored. This trend suggests that adult publishers exposed, and perhaps only wanted to expose, antebellum child readers to what white writers had to say about slavery, which contributes to the white supremacist values underpinning these stories.

speak directly to child readers and encourage them to follow the activist example set forth by the fictional children.

Eva in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* establishes the paradigm for this type of child activism. In a famous scene replicated in the children's adaptations, Eva reforms Topsy by sitting beside her on the floor. In this spot, Eva shows Topsy love by "laying her little thin, white hand on Topsy's shoulder" (409). Since she and Topsy inhabit space on the same level, Eva can more easily use a physical act to provide comfort and compassion. As a result, Topsy finally declares that she will stop misbehaving, and "a ray of heavenly love…penetrated the darkness of her [Topsy's] heathen soul!" (409). By emphasizing a childlike space on the floor where adults are not likely to sit, Stowe suggests that low areas—and the girls who inhabit them—have power. Even though Eva uplifts Topsy's spiritual and emotional conditions in this low-level site, however, the type of power demonstrated on the floor also reinforces a system of white superiority. Here, the white girl has the ability to change others, while the black girl passively waits for others to help her. Black and white southern girls in abolitionist literature often inhabit the same space, but they do not use it in the same way.

While the pervasiveness of white supremacism in children's abolitionist literature is not a new claim, my argument extends this discussion to consider how place impacts white supremacist representations of southern girls.[17] More specifically, I propose that authors use southern domestic spaces to shape southern girlhood as an experience defined

[17] Scholars who argue that children's abolitionist literature contains white supremacist ideologies include Paula Connolly, Donnarae MacCann, Robin Bernstein, Lesley Ginsberg, and Sarah Roth. Likewise, critics such as Richard Yarborough, Eric Sundquist, and Anna Mae Duane have discussed the problematic ways *Uncle Tom's Cabin* links innately inferior traits to black characters.

by racial hierarchies. By following the slaveholding protocols of southern homes, white southern girls are angelic antislavery reformers and black southern girls remain heathens in need of saving. White girls work to denigrate slavery, but they do so in ways that adhere to southern domestic protocols favoring whiteness over blackness. As Karen Sanchez-Eppler explains, "By situating antislavery discourse within an idealized domestic setting, these stories purport to offer moral and emotional standards by which to measure, and through which to correct, the evils of slavery. The problem is that these standards are implicated in the values and structures of authority and profit they seek to criticize" (45). In other words, moral standards such as love, education, and Christian faith are an important part of nineteenth-century domesticity, but these values also rely on hierarchies of power, which complicates the abolitionist agenda when it occurs in domestic sites. When enacted in slaveholding households, this agenda appears even more contradictory. Fictional southern girls may protest the values of their home regions, but they cannot escape a regional upbringing defined by race, place, and space.

The Arrangement and Protocol of the Slaveholding Household

In abolitionist books featuring southern girls, children's authors typically depict the arrangement and protocol of southern homes as race-based. The slave system shaped explicit and implicit codes within antebellum southern homes, thus creating domestic experiences for southern girls that were unique to their region. For instance, southern slaveholding homes were sites of both domesticity and labor, which differed from northern conceptions of home as a more private domestic environment. In fact, Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin describes her grandfather's plantation as a "community and business rolled into one" (22). As businesses, these homes were not places separated from

economic or public concerns. Inside and outside the house, both black laborers and white owners worked: slaves completed designated tasks, while their masters and mistresses supervised. On smaller farms, owners and slaves sometimes worked side by side, yet home still operated as a biracial labor system. As a result, the structure of slaveholding homes, especially the plantation, differed from the nineteenth-century view of home in the North. For this reason, historian Elizabeth Fox-Genovese labels the slaveholding home a household (38-39, 102). Instead of a single-family unit, the slaveholding household contained a variety of biologically related and unrelated individuals, all of whom were considered "family."

The plantation, in particular, diverged from the northern view of "home." Rather than one building, plantations included multiple buildings spread over hundreds or thousands of acres. The layout of the plantation was organized in a way that emphasized the white owners as the center of authority. While plantations varied in size, a plantation differed from a smaller farm because it had a larger work force of at least 20 slaves, it focused on one type of commercial crop, and the buildings formed with Aiken calls "a nucleated settlement complex" (7). On most plantations, less important buildings surrounded the most important buildings, and the Big House was typically central. A map of Hopeton Plantation near Darien, Georgia illustrates this nucleated layout (Figure 2). In the top left corner of the map, service buildings, sheds, and slave cabins fan out from the Big House—the larger building marked "owner." However, as Vlach has observed, the Big House was described as "big" only in comparison to the smaller buildings that surrounded it, such as kitchens, smokehouses, icehouses, dairies, barns, and slave cabins (8). This spatial relationship between the Big House and smaller outbuildings functioned

to reinforce the racial dynamics on the plantation: white masters and mistresses held more authority than their slaves who worked and lived in the outbuildings, grounds, and fields.

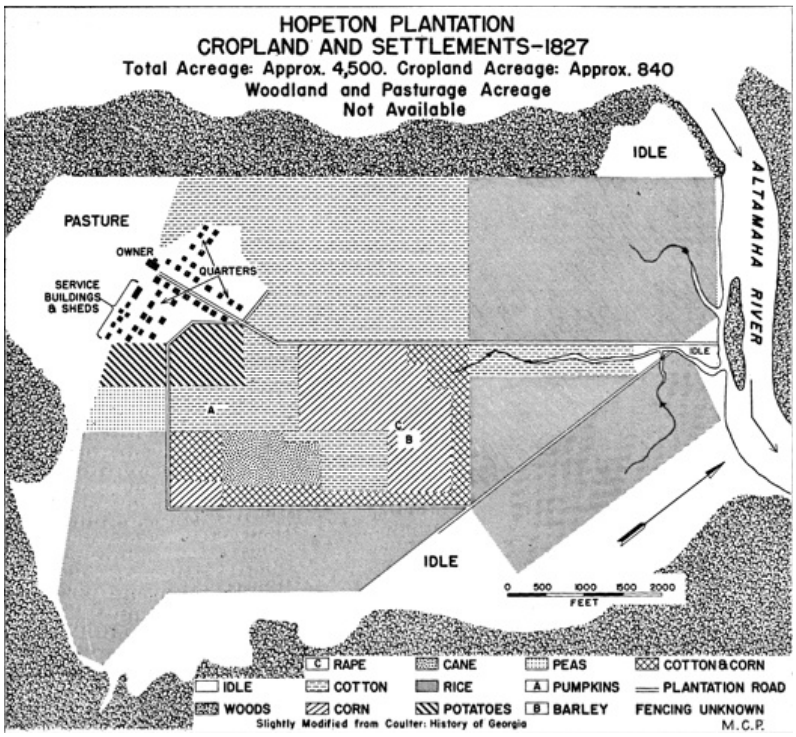

Figure 2: Map of Hopeton Plantation. Image from Merle Prunty, "The Renaissance of the Southern Plantation," *Geographical Review* 45.4 (1955): 464. Courtesy of American Geographical Society.

Though individual plantations varied depending on location, wealth, and type of crop grown, historians such as Fox-Genovese, John Vlach, and Charles S. Aiken have found that most plantations contained the Big House where the white master's family lived, outbuildings for food and crop production, slave quarters, barns, gardens, and fields. With these buildings, a plantation felt like a larger community rather than a single home. In fact, in a memoir published in 1850, Emily Burke described her Georgia plantation as a "township" with mills, shops, and a church in addition to the houses and fields (224-25). Though appearing and operating like a town, all of these various

buildings and people still formed an inclusive household unit, especially since the white plantation owner had collective authority over this domain. As a result, the concept of "home" on the plantation encompassed a much larger area and population than homes in other regions or in urban areas of the South. With the exception of the brief time Eva and Topsy spend in New Orleans before going to a more rural villa, abolitionist children's literature featuring southern girls primarily depicts them living on a plantation. Yet in urban or rural spaces, the books examined in this chapter construct a vision of southern girlhood tied to the size, labor, and population of slaveholding households.

Although many plantations had living quarters for the white slaveholders, the owner and his family did not always live there year round, especially on larger plantations. In addition, some planters owned multiple plantations across county or state lines, so the white family either lived at one of these estates or at another location in a city, while an overseer maintained the plantations. Nevertheless, as Aiken has found, even if a plantation did not contain a Big House, a building to process crops such as a gin or mill still functioned as the nucleus of white authority (7). Since the plantations in *Gertrude Lee, The Earnest Laborer,* and *Step by Step* contain Big Houses with permanent residents, these writers suggest that this feature is an important part of plantation life. Instead of a gin house or a mill, a Big House establishes domesticity—and not economic or agricultural structures—as the central social structure on the plantation.

Abolitionist children's literature also represents the nucleated spatial arrangement of plantations. In *Step by Step*, for instance, two slave girls leave the kitchen, which is located near the Big House, and walk on "the lane that led down to the negro quarters" (ch. 7). "Down" suggests that the girls leave a central area and go to a more marginal one.

The girls move "down" the racial hierarchy of places privileged on the plantation. With the exception of Topsy who lives in the house with Eva and Miss Ophelia, slave girls in these abolitionist texts stay in marginal locations, such as the yard, the slave quarters, or the woods. In general, slave girls in abolitionist texts only enter the Big House when completing chores or when receiving discipline. Because slave girls primarily stay in places designated for slaves, their movement on the plantation emphasizes their inferior status

As the girls in *Step by Step* walk from the kitchen to the quarters, they demonstrate another type of spatial distinction in slaveholding households: slave versus master space. Though white owners ruled the entirety of plantations, some sites were more of a slave space where black laborers spent more time than their white mistresses and masters. Such locations included the slave quarters, fields, and outbuildings (Vlach 16, Fox-Genovese 137-138). On plantations, one important outbuilding was the kitchen, which was typically a separate building from the Big House. Although kitchens were unconnected to the Big House for practical reasons—such as to keep a potential fire from spreading and to isolate residents from the unpleasant smells and heat—this layout also indicated that slave laborers who prepared food belonged in a different physical location from the slaveholders who ate the food (Vlach 43). A cook on a Louisiana plantation expressed this protocol when she denied her mistress, Caroline Merrick, entry into the kitchen. As Merrick writes in her memoir, the cook tells her, "Go inter de house, Miss Carrie! Yer ain't no manner er use heah only ter git yer face red wid de heat. I'll have dinner like yer wants it. Jes' read yer book an' res' easy til I sen's it ter de dining room" (17). The type of work completed in the kitchen, such as preparing food or cleaning

dishes, was not expected of white owners like Miss Carrie; therefore, they were of no "use" and did not belong there. Instead, the dining room was the domain of white owners because it was the location where they received service. In the main house, white owners could enjoy leisure pursuits, such as reading and resting, which the cook instructs Miss Carrie to do. In a separate building away from the center of authority in the main house, however, slaves like Miss Carrie's cook could claim some authority of their own and make independent decisions. On her grandfather's Georgia plantation, for instance, Katharine Lumpkin notes that "Aunt Sarah ruled" in the kitchen, which stood thirty feet from the main house (8). Both master and slave entered the Big House and the kitchen, but their roles sometimes shifted slightly when they moved outside the center of the plantation and into the marginal slave space.

In addition, plantation domestic space included both indoor and outdoor areas. On plantations, the domestic domain was not confined to the Big House, especially since so many housekeeping chores occurred in the outlying areas, such as cooking in the kitchen and washing laundry in the yard. Vlach points out that the yard—a seemingly outdoor term—included the outdoor spaces between buildings but also indoor structures located in immediate vicinity of the Big House such as the kitchen, smokehouse, dairy, and well (34). Indeed, a large number of outbuildings in the yard was a feature of southern homes (77). As workers, slave girls had mobility between the indoor and outdoor parts of the yard. Historian Wilma King has found that slave girls worked outside by hanging laundry, feeding chickens, gathering eggs, milking cows, and gathering items to make candles (28-29). They also worked in the kitchen, as Fox-Genovese notes, and carried food from the kitchen to the Big House (154). In fact, Marie Jenkins Schwartz observes

that more girls than boys worked inside the Big House as maids or nurses for the master's children, suggesting that slave girls had more indoor and outdoor mobility than slave boys (108). In this way, slave girls had opportunities to cross spatial borders between indoors and outdoors, as well as white and black areas. Other historical accounts indicate that slave girls and white girls had similar opportunities for mobility, especially when engaging in play. In her slave narrative, Annie Burton writes about this feature shaping her enslaved childhood: "On the plantation there were ten white children and fourteen colored children. Our days were spent roaming about from plantation to plantation" (3). For some southern girls, therefore, the outdoors was a space where girls of different races and legal statuses could share experiences, including travel and play. Slave girls like Burton, however, did not have as much mobility as their young mistresses, and Burton is only able to "roam" because she accompanies white children. Passing through indoor and outdoor spaces was contingent upon the rules of the slave system.

Girl Mobility in the Slaveholding Household

Abolitionist children's writers represent southern domestic spaces as places that follow race-based protocols. Though contesting slavery, these books do not challenge the spoken and unspoken rules that regulated slaveholding households. For instance, in both adult and child editions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the depiction of the St. Clare home reinforces the need for the managerial work completed by slaveholders. While *Uncle Tom's Cabin* demonstrate the harsh reality that many slaves experienced, they also suggest that some of this managerial work can have positive effects on slaves—especially for Topsy. For example, to reform Topsy's wild mannerisms, Miss Ophelia "resolved, instead of comfortably making her own bed, sweeping and dusting her own chamber—

which she had hitherto done, in utter scorn of all offers of help from the chambermaid of the establishment—to condemn herself to martyrdom of instructing Topsy to perform these operations" (Stowe 357-358). Here, Miss Ophelia changes her northern behaviors to align with those in slaveholding households, where black domestic workers complete everyday chores. Miss Ophelia does not give Topsy the physically demanding work that many girl house slaves experienced, which historian Wilma King notes involved ironing or washing clothes (81); however, Miss Ophelia still indoctrinates Topsy into a racial protocol where blacks serve whites and where this service can be beneficial in teaching Topsy discipline and obedience.

Eva's interactions with Topsy also adhere to this protocol; however, the methods by which white girls complete managerial work differs from those used by adult women. Miss Ophelia attempts to cause change by whipping Topsy, but this physical violence fails to stop Topsy's propensity to steal and misbehave. Eva, on the other hand, offers love and proclaims, "O, Topsy, poor child, I love you!" (409). By "laying her little thin, white hand on Topsy's shoulder," Eva uses a physical act to express her love, but it is a movement of comfort rather than the hurt associated with whipping (409). Eva then asks Topsy to "try to be good," and Topsy replies, "I will try, I will try; I never did care nothin' about it before" (410). Eva's slave management succeeds because she uses more passive and emotional methods, instead of aggressive ones. Because Eva is more successful than Miss Ophelia, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* suggests girlish types of work more effectively establish white dominance and black obedience.

As an antislavery text, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* does find fault with many aspects of the southern household, such as Miss Ophelia's attempts to reorganize a kitchen made

cluttered because it is purely slave space and not under the control of a white woman. In fact, critics such as Gillian Brown and Lucinda MacKethan argue that Stowe critiques the southern home, especially as it is represented in antebellum plantation novels. They maintain Stowe shows how the slave system corrupts domestic organization, familial affection, and the separation between private home and public marketplace (Brown 18, MacKethan "Domesticity in Dixie" 225). While Stowe does express many flaws in the southern household, she does not completely reject the racial etiquette of these households as the earlier example with Miss Ophelia and Topsy suggests. Moreover, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* also provides insight into the peculiarities of southern domestic spaces, showing how they produce two forms of girlhood shaped by the slave system. Topsy's chores identify how racial protocol separates the experiences of slave and slaveholding girls and identifies the different types of work they complete. Unlike Topsy, Eva does not complete household labor, such as making beds and dusting. Instead, Eva performs spiritual work by praying and talking to her slaves about God. Eva's spiritual efforts are a more ideological kind of work that indoctrinates the slaves into the same Christian perspective as the slaveholders. Eva also chooses to engage in this work, while Topsy does not. Though different, both Eva's spiritual work and Topsy's physical labor allow Eva to remain in a superior position, which aligns with slaveholding protocols.

Additionally, the St. Clare household's emphasis on slave and slaveholding work creates an environment where black and white girls do not have the same access to locations or the same freedom of movement within locations. Unlike the experiences described by Annie Burton, Eva and Topsy do not "roam" outside together, even once they relocate to the family's rural estate on Lake Pontchartrain. Here, white girls have

more spatial mobility, while the movement of black girls is more restricted. Because Eva has more time for leisure, she can go to more locations than Topsy does. In Stowe's original version and *A Peep into Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Aunt Mary, for example, Eva claims authority in both inside and outside locations. While inside sitting rooms and parlors, she asks her mother to be kinder to Mammy. Outside, when riding horses with her cousin Henrique, she convinces Henrique to love his slave boy Dodo instead of beat him (Stowe 396). Because she has the ability to move to different locations, Eva can more effectively guard a greater number of slaves from harm. Conversely, Stowe and Aunt Mary restrict Topsy's movement. Though house slaves were often permitted entry into the yard, Topsy does not leave the main house, both in New Orleans and the villa near Lake Pontchartrain. As Aunt Mary writes, "Miss Ophelia resolved to confine [Topsy's] sphere of operation and instruction chiefly to [Miss Ophelia's] own chamber" (187). Though advocating for the freedom of slaves, Stowe and Aunt Mary do not show girls like Topsy acquiring freedom of movement. Instead, by representing and strengthening racial separation in slaveholding households, these writers empower white girls and limit black girls.

While *Uncle Tom's Cabin* represents the experiences of both black and white southern girlhood, *Gertrude Lee* and *The Earnest Laborer* focus more on white girlhood. These two books depict the plantation household, showing home as a place with indoor and outdoor sites, both of which shape girlhood. In *Gertrude Lee,* a twelve-year-old girl spends a year with her mother's family on their South Carolina plantation and convinces them that slavery is wrong. Gertrude implements her abolitionist reform both inside and outside, as well as in the Big House and on the grounds. Yet she starts in the Big House,

which reflects the southern emphasis on this location as the nucleus of the plantation. For instance, she refuses to have a slave help her get dressed and serves as an example to the rest of her family (30). By making this action in her bedroom, Gertrude indicates that the Big House—including its more private sections—is the location from which reform should begin. This placement is practical, as the Big House is where the slaveholders who need reform live, but it also implies that abolitionist efforts should focus more on white individuals and white spaces than on the slaves suffering in the system. In prioritizing the Big House, Gertrude upholds a foundational aspect of slaveholding households.

This emphasis continues as Gertrude's activism spreads outward to the grounds, and she asserts that slavery keeps white southerners inside too often. According to Gertrude, slavery gives white southerners "indolence" that results in physical weakness (40). Throughout the book, Gertrude emphasizes how the outdoors benefits the white residents of this plantation, especially the children. Gertrude takes her cousins Grace and Arthur walking and running on the plantation's grounds, giving them a sense of their own independence instead of depending on slaves for every activity. Consequently, these active pursuits make Grace "healthy and strong" (68), implying that girls benefit from outdoor mobility. This type of pursuit was common for girls in the nineteenth century. In fact, Sharon O'Brien has found that conduct manuals advised girls to engage in active outdoor behaviors to improve their physical health, which would ensure their future viability as healthy mothers (352). However, Gertrude makes it clear that girlish outdoor pursuits occur for other reasons. They give her a chance to rescue her cousin Grace from the "weakness of a deluded people—masters, yet slaves equally with their servants—slaves of avarice and indolence" (40). In other words, active, outdoor behaviors ensure

that the slaveholders do not become too lazy. This designation positions slaveholders as the "slaves" in the system, which once again privileges white experiences and ignores the black laborers who are the true victims. When Gertrude protects her cousin's physical health, she helps Grace maintain a position of white superiority both physically and mentally. Gertrude also suggests that rural landscapes can be beneficial, which coincides with southern agrarian beliefs that rural areas provide a better and healthier lifestyle than more industrial or urban areas; however, this book advocates a racially charged version of agrarianism. *Gertrude Lee* implies that the open space of the plantation mainly allows white individuals to become "better."

The Earnest Laborer emphasizes a similar version of agrarianism by suggesting that a home with close proximity to outdoor spaces benefits white girls. In this book, the "earnest laborer" is an abolitionist schoolteacher, and his star pupil is Gelia, an eight-year-old daughter of a Mississippi plantation owner who is "as lively as the morning birds, ready for a run in the woods or a frolic with her brothers" (35). Because Gelia lives on a plantation, she has ample outdoor sites in which she can run and frolic. This book's anonymous author constructs Gelia's "frolicking" behavior as tomboyish, especially in comparison to her thirteen-year-old sister May, who is a "young lady" and criticizes Gelia's desire "to be so much like a boy" (38). The book does not condemn these tomboyish behaviors, however, because they are given the positive adjective of "lively" (35). Because of her young age, Gelia has the opportunity to explore all parts of the plantation and the rural landscape beyond its borders. She even accompanies her three brothers to a nearby stream to fish and play beside the water (121, 127). Through such outdoor experiences, this white girl gains enough mobility to cross gender lines and

engage in boyish pursuits. Like Gertrude, Gelia suggests that southern white girls should not limit themselves to the indoor spaces of slave girls like Topsy. Yet Gelia's outdoor behavior also calls attention to the protocol of the slaveholding household. Unlike slaves, white girls like Gelia have the time for leisure pursuits, and they use the outside for whatever purposes they desire, including their roles as guardian angels.

Angels of the Slaveholding Household

In understanding how race shapes the behaviors and mobility of girls living in southern households, we can see a codependent dynamic where authors construct slaveholding girls as guardian angels of more passive slaves, including slave girls. The spatial boundaries and conduct of these southern domestic sites produce young female characters' roles as givers or receivers of protection. As white girls move between inside and outside locations, they become protectors of the entirety of the slaveholding household and its inhabitants because they claim authority in these spaces. An example of this dynamic appears in the recurring motif of white southern girls exposing slaves to literacy or teaching slaves to read.

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, teaching slaves to read and write was illegal in the South. Literacy kept the white planter class elevated above the black men, women, and children they owned. Nevertheless, white girls occasionally engaged in the subversive act of teaching slaves to read, especially if they owned young girls as their nurses or maids. As a child in South Carolina, abolitionist Sarah Grimké, for instance, taught her girl maid to read. She later recalled, "I took an almost malicious satisfaction in teaching my little waiting-maid at night, when she was supposed to be occupied in combing and brushing my long locks. The light was put out, the keyhole

screened, and flat on our stomachs, before the fire, with the spelling-book under our eyes, we defied the laws of South Carolina" (qtd. in Lerner 18). Teaching slaves to read, therefore, is an attempt to protect them as individuals and acknowledge their humanity. It is a significantly more dangerous form of protection than Eva loving Topsy because there could be legal consequences. Yet abolitionist children's books indicate that white girls should take this risk. These texts depict girls of both races using literacy to disrupt the racial barrier that formed a foundation of southern society; however, these authors do not suggest literacy gives equal opportunities to white and black girls. Though the books attempt to use slave literacy to resist southern racial codes, the places where these scenes occur illustrate that these moments reinforce white supremacist divisions between white and black characters. For example, in the Sarah Grimké example, the white girl holds the power as the teacher because they are in her bedroom—a white space located in the master's home. In general, race-based protocol of certain locations position white girls as teachers and black girls as students.

In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, for instance, the outside site of the garden enables Eva's educational activism. In a well-known scene replicated in the two children's adaptations, Eva reads from her Bible to Tom, and they sit "on a little mossy seat, in an arbor, at the foot of the garden" (Stowe 381). By reading from the Bible, she guards Tom's spiritual welfare as he learns more about his faith and how to live a Christian life. In this location, Tom can momentarily take a break from serving Eva's family, and Eva can freely read to him because the arbor creates walls to shield them from the influence of Eva's parents, especially her mother who would not approve of Eva's efforts. Tom and Eva also sit together on the bench and share the same physical space, thus joining as brother and

sister in Christ. In writing about this scene, Jane Tompkins maintains that Stowe links Eva and Tom in ways that elevate his position as a slave, "thereby turning the socio-political order upside down" (139). While I agree with Tompkins that this scene gives Tom more power than the slaveholding system gives him, Eva's efforts still reinforce some of the socio-political views of this time period, especially those involving white dominance.

Though Eva is subversive when she reads to Tom, Stowe presents a more complicated view of race relations in this scene. Here, Eva follows slaveholding protocol, which assigns white individuals a superior position in the garden. The line between master and slave remained in the garden; therefore, master and slave used the garden for different purposes. In a letter to her husband about the garden on her plantation on St. Simons Island, Georgia, Anna Matilda King writes, "Every afternoon the dear children and myself go down to the garden. We walk and work until dark. The garden is indeed a very pleasant resort to us….Quamina certainly deserves much credit for having so much done" (King 23). Though King mentions that she and her children "work" in the garden, their slave Quamina completes the labor of tending to the plants growing there. The garden work of slaveholders, as other letters by King also indicate, entails supervising the slaves. Moreover, white owners have the most mobility in the garden because they can use the space for a variety of purposes: they supervise slaves and enjoy it as a place of leisure—a "pleasant resort." For slaves, on the other hand, the garden is solely a place of work and white authority.

Demonstrating the kind of "work" that King engages in, Eva supervises Tom in Stowe's garden. Indeed, she reads to Tom instead of allowing him to read and have that

knowledge for himself. She also directs Tom's attention. As the narrator explains, "The child rose, and pointed her little hand to the sky; the glow of evening lit her golden hair and flushed cheek with a kind of unearthly radiance…. 'I'm going there,' she said" (382). The outdoor landscape here emphasizes Eva's role as a guardian angel: the setting sun "lit her golden hair" as if she has an angel's halo. Because Eva is outside, she can more easily look like an angel, and she seems closer to heaven where she can literally become a guardian angel. By harnessing this spiritual power, Eva expresses ultimate mobility between earthly and unearthly realms. The garden thus accentuates her ability to oversee Tom by acting as a spiritual guide. Just as a garden tames and cultivates the wild parts of nature, Eva does the same with Tom. She domesticates his soul in a space that domesticates natural landscapes.

Eva's angel imagery is common for girls in abolitionist children's literature, and it correlates with depictions of both Gertrude in *Gertrude Lee* and Gelia in *The Earnest Laborer.* Gertrude is called an "angel of mercy" (46), and Gelia is a nickname for Angelin, which is similar to Eva's full name, Evangeline, and accentuates the ability of a girl to save others. These representations draw upon and contribute to nineteenth-century views of women as guardians of morality in the home. The association between women, domesticity, and angels occurred in many nineteenth-century transatlantic texts, including Coventry Patmore's poem "The Angel in the House" (1854) about an ideal wife who is submissive, pious, and pure. However, in American domestic fiction, as scholars such as Jane Tompkins, Nina Baym, and Elizabeth Moss have argued, female writers depicted the home as the place where women gained power, especially as they exerted a moral and spiritual influence upon their husbands and children. For this reason, as Ralph Waldo

Emerson remarks in his 1855 lecture at the Women's Rights Convention, women were seen as "the civilizers of mankind" (n. pag.). Using these gender designations, abolitionist writers like Stowe show girl characters assuming authoritative roles as they work to improve the emotional and spiritual conditions of slaves. In fact, adult white women in these stories are either absent, barely mentioned, or incompetent, which constructs homes reliant upon girls instead of adult women.

In abolitionist books featuring southern homes, however, girls are angels of the household. Their moral influence includes promoting the racial codes of these spaces. When Eva acts as a spiritual guide for Tom, she indicates that angels of the slaveholding household gain power through a form of domesticity where whiteness is elevated above blackness. Indeed, Stowe's children's adaptation *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabin* emphasizes these racial codes more than the original novel, especially in its changes during the garden scene. While Connolly argues that *Pictures and Stories* emphasizes black agency more than the original text, this garden scene suggests otherwise (31). In the arbor scene, Eva "will read to Tom for hours on hours / And sit with him on the grass all day; / You see she is wreathing pretty flowers / About his neck, in her pleasant play" (Stowe, *Pictures* 21). This poem emphasizes Eva as the one who possesses knowledge—the ability to read—and Tom is merely an object for her to decorate. Furthermore, the poem does not mention a Bible, which suggests that Eva is not trying to elevate Tom's position by exposing him to Christian principles. This scene shifts focus from the reading to Eva's play, which makes her seem less of a protector of the slaves and more like a protector of southern racial protocols where slaves enable white girls to enjoy leisure time. As a children's text, this book focuses on play

presumably to emphasize Eva's childlike qualities, but this modification further reinforces the conduct and structure of the slaveholding household. Like King's garden, this place is a "resort" solely for Eva (23). Parts of nature—"the pretty flowers"—give Eva a recreational activity, instead of forming an arbor to create a site that affords some attempt at racial equality. The garden and Tom exist for Eva's amusement, which enhances a hierarchy where blackness means serving the needs of white owners. In this case, Tom serves Eva's need to play. When southern abolitionist girls enter these outdoor areas, they spread a moral influence over a larger domestic area than an individual building. In doing so, girls like Eva ensure that the entirety of the house and grounds adhere to the racial values that underwrite the slave system.

While Eva acts as an angel in the household "civilizing" slaves into a system of white supremacy, Topsy does not have the same opportunity. Robin Bernstein notes that angelic features, such as innocence, characterized childhood as specifically white in the nineteenth century, and Bernstein argues that Stowe extends these qualities to Topsy (48). Indeed, Eva tells Topsy, "You can go to heaven at last, and be an angel forever, just as much as if you were white" (Stowe, *Uncle* 410). Stowe indicates this angelic path is open to white and black girls; however, Eva and Topsy do not and cannot become the same type of angel. While Topsy certainly transforms into a less wild, more spiritual girl, she does not act like a guardian angel as Eva does. Unlike Eva, Topsy does not protect slaves by improving their material or emotional conditions. She does not teach them to read or help them find God. Moreover, the children's edition *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabin* excludes Topsy's conclusion from the original novel where she grows up, becomes a missionary, and offers spiritual protection to others (612). In this version of

the story, Topsy can become saved, but she cannot save others, which gives her even less agency in comparison to Eva. The omission of Topsy's conclusion gives white child readers a more white supremacist depiction of girlhood. It suggests black girls cannot achieve Eva's angelic model and black girls cannot be protectors in any form.

Like *Uncle Tom's Cabin, Gertrude Lee* also contains white southern girls who are angels of the slaveholding household. In addition to the protagonist Gertrude, her cousins Grace and Nellie implement educational and spiritual activism, but they do so through the nuclear spatial organization of the plantation. For instance, Gertrude's cousin Nellie teaches the alphabet to "black Maggie," the nine-year-old daughter of the plantation's cook, in a scene that also takes place in a garden-like area with an arbor (55). This scene constructs the angel of the slaveholding household as one who brings the racial protocols from the center of the plantation to its more peripheral areas. As with Eva and Tom, these girls can break some southern laws because they venture away from adult supervision, which seems to construct certain parts of the outdoors as a child space, but it is specifically a site where white children are in charge. Nellie supervises Maggie's religious experiences when the narrator remarks that this act of Nellie's "shed light upon the darkened mind" (56). The white girl is the one able to turn a "darkened mind" to light, while the black girl has a much less active role and can only receive the instruction.

Through the white girls in *Gertrude Lee* challenge the slave system, their efforts still create race-based power hierarchies. Protecting through Biblical literacy makes Gertrude's slaves appear more like suffering victims who need white redemption. As Gertrude explains, "If I teach them to read, they may learn from the Bible to love God and serve him acceptably, to walk no more in the darkness, but in the glorious light of the

gospel of Christ" (58). For Gertrude, the slave system is "dark" in that it causes these black characters to live in sinful circumstances. Through instilling literacy in young slaves, therefore, Gertrude guards their souls against sin. She enables their conversion, which keeps them from suffering in the darkness away from Christ and from becoming corrupted by the system. As a teacher, then, Gertrude becomes a protector. Using compassion as an instrument to spiritually defend the slaves, Gertrude shows the power behind emotional forces of protection. Yet in exercising this power, Gertrude also presents white southern girls as the gatekeepers of knowledge and of faith for black characters who are unable to have these experiences on their own.

Gertrude Lee continues to reinforce the protocol of the slaveholding household when the author indicates black children must learn to read so they can become more like their white masters. As Gertrude's cousin Grace explains after she starts helping Gertrude, "I should think it would be much more pleasant for all the family if the slaves knew how to read, and were able to talk and act more like white people" (72-73). Grace expresses an expectation that denies slaves their own identities. If they must perform whiteness through speech and behaviors, then their own tendencies are not acceptable. This view implies that white tendencies are the most "pleasant," which denies slave children the ability to have their own distinct experiences. This type of literate, spiritual southern girlhood, therefore, really implies *white* girlhood and establishes whiteness as the model to which black children must aspire, especially if they want to communicate more effectively in their society.

Gelia in *The Earnest Laborer* also brings the protocol of the Big House to the plantation grounds, though she enters more peripheral locations than the girls in *Gertrude*

Lee do. Throughout the book, Gelia slowly starts to agree with her teacher's abolitionist views that slavery keeps those in bondage from becoming Christians, and she wants to change this aspect of their lives. Unlike her teacher, though, Gelia has access to more locations in which she can "help" the slaves. Presumably because slaves align more with white children than with white adults on plantations, Gelia can enter the slave quarters, sit outside a cabin, and tell the field workers Bible stories that she learned from her teacher (69). By teaching in this location, Gelia demonstrates a more intrusive form of the slaveholding household's protocol in that she enters a space designated specifically for the slaves. Though historians disagree about the extent to which the slave quarters were free from white control, many accounts of slave life suggest that slaves could gain some autonomy in the quarters.[18] Because the quarters were often situated some distance from the Big House, as Peter Kolchin observes, this area provided "a real if insecure refuge from the outside world" (149). Here, slaves could briefly escape from their work, engage in leisure pursuits, and form bonds with other slaves. On plantations with larger slave populations, such as the one portrayed in *The Earnest Laborer*, slaves developed and maintained distinct cultural identities during their time in the quarters, often by sharing African folklore through stories, song, dance, and language. In the quarters, slaves could develop some autonomy from their masters, although they could never completely escape the master's dominance (Kolchin 150-152). Conversely, *The Earnest Laborer* suggests slaves could not even gain some autonomy in the quarters, nor should they want to. The

[18] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and John Vlach both note that the close proximity of the overseer's house inserted white authority in the slave quarters (Fox-Genovese 151; Vlach 136). In addition, because the master regulated food, clothing, and housing, among other facets of their lives, it was difficult for slaves in the quarters to completely escape from the control of their owners.

narrator refers to the quarters as a "village" (69), which implies it is an insular area with its own set of codes; however, Gelia's activism transforms their refuge into a place of white control that operates by the white supremacist standards of the rest of the plantation.

Primarily, Gelia takes the slave domestic domain and uses it for her own purposes. As her teacher George watches this scene, the slaves "did not observe the approach of the teacher, so attentively were they listening to Gelia, while she repeated, with a countenance glowing with animation, the stories she had heard in the morning. She was frequently interrupted by questions; but nothing daunted, she answered with unwavering assurance" (69). As the slaves ask questions, Gelia becomes the teacher who holds knowledge that they do not have but need to acquire. In this scene, she even sits "on an old stool with a group of negroes lying or sitting upon the ground around her" (69). Unlike Tom and Eva who sit on a bench together, Gelia and her slaves do not share the same sitting space. This place is their home, but the slaves replicate the racial hierarchy of the plantation with this seating arrangement: sitting on furniture, the white girl inhabits the privileged and more civilized spot because she sits on furniture. Gelia's actions imply that white owners—especially their children—have control in all areas of the plantation, including the marginal quarters.

Gelia's teaching also expresses the colonialist implications of the angel of the slaveholding household. In her own lessons at the school, she, her siblings, and her teacher create imaginary empires, complete with churches, schools, railroads, and boats. George explains, "religion and education are the means of the improvement among the people. Do heathen nations have railroads, telegraphs, and canals?" (42). As builders and

traders, the children practice colonizing and "improving" these imaginary "heathen nations." This view assumes religion and education enable personal and moral growth, as well as transportation networks and industry. The children turn these fictional places into what they—wealthy, white southerners—consider an enlightened, civilized, and progressive country.

This game's focus on religion and education mirrors what Gelia accomplishes in the quarters. The slaves are like the heathen people who need "improvement." Therefore, when Gelia teaches the slaves and when she later encourages them to attend more lessons at George's Sunday School, she expresses what the narrator calls "signs of progress" (43). This "progress," however, changes the quarters: "The senseless songs of the quarters, so long heard mingled with the noise of the rude dance, were exchanged for the sweet and melting songs of Zion" (92-93). Because of Gelia's teaching, the slaves use the space of the quarters differently, and the culture of the white owners and Gelia's northern abolitionist teacher has power in the slave quarters. Christian hymns replace the African traditions, which the narrator views as inferior by referring to their songs as "senseless" and their dances as "rude." This erasure of the slaves' distinct cultural identities suggests that the slaves do not need a refuge from their masters; instead, *The Earnest Laborer* implies that slaves want to be and should always act as they do in white plantation spaces. Gelia can thus teach the slaves as long as she indoctrinates them into a specifically white, Christian identity. In doing so, *The Earnest Laborer* constructs white southern girlhood as an experience that protects white lifestyles and perpetuates them in place of black ones.

Figure 3: Eva gallops through her plantation. From *Little Eva: The Flower of the South*, New York: Phil. J. Cozans, 1853. Image courtesy of the John Hay Library, Brown University Library.

As Eva, Gertrude, and Gelia follow and strengthen the protocol of the slaveholding household, they suggest that southern domestic spaces enable white girls to be spiritual guides, teachers, and protectors. In this representation, these abolitionist texts resemble proslavery children's literature of the antebellum era, especially *Little Eva: The Flower of the South* (1853).[19] Written by an anonymous author, *Little Eva* is an eight-page book about the daughter of a plantation owner who cheerfully takes care of her slaves. This Eva is not the same girl from Stowe's book, and she lives in Alabama instead of Louisiana; however, she is similar to Stowe's Eva in that she reads the Bible to slave children and teaches them the alphabet (3, 5). In addition, this Eva is associated with the outdoors, and most of the illustrations show her interacting with slaves in various spots on the plantation. In fact, the illustration on the title page shows Eva riding a white horse like a knight arriving to save the day (Figure 3). These slaves do not need a heroic adult

[19] *Little Eva: The Flower of the South* is a children's anti-Tom book, a genre of proslavery texts that attempted to contradict the portrayal of slavery in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and show slavery as a beneficial social system for both master and slave.

man but a young girl, who is most useful because she brings emotional and spiritual comfort to the slaves. By challenging the concept of adult men as the primary force managing the plantation, this text disrupts both age and gender categories

The proslavery Eva also has many striking similarities with the white girls in abolitionist texts, which points to the ways these abolitionist texts also function to endorse white dominance. This Eva is also a guardian angel of a slaveholding household. Indeed, her yellow hat appears similar to a halo and accentuates her angelic mission, which is made possible by the plantation landscape. As the image of the Big House in the background emphasizes, she leaves this building, but she does not leave her home. Here, home is a large area that includes this path on which she rides. Because she lives on a large property, Eva can gallop a horse down a path and engage in an athletic activity without leaving the borders of the plantation. Through this mobility, she can quickly travel to the marginal areas of the plantation to help slaves. For instance, Eva enters the slave quarters to take soup to an ill elderly slave, thus protecting the old woman's health but also claiming authority in this cabin (4). In doing so, Eva ensures that the Big House remains the nucleus of the plantation. Just as the house is in the center of the picture, the house's protocols of white superiority remain the central social system on all parts of this plantation, including the slave space in the quarters. As a guardian angel, Eva is the agent enforcing these codes. This characterization of Eva suggests that both proslavery and antislavery writers construct white southern girlhood with distinct regional traits, such as protecting slaves through Christian education and having mobility in outdoor locations. Especially in the 1850s and 1860s, this white model is the dominant construction of southern girlhood in children's literature.

Racial and Spatial Hybridity with a Mixed-Race Southern Girl

In general, children's abolitionist writers represent southern girlhood as either black or white experiences, not addressing the reality that many mulatto girls grew up in the antebellum South. This representation also detours from trends in antislavery literature written for adults in which the mixed-race woman is a prevalent figure. Many mixed-race female characters appeared as the tragic mulatta figure, such as Cassy in *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* The tragic mulatta appears in texts written by both black and white authors, such as "The Quadroons" (1842) by Lydia Maria Child and *Clotel* by William Wells Brown. These characters typically raise questions about the stability of racial categories. . As Eve Allegra Raimon notes, these characters "functioned as a device to investigate what place mixed-race persons are going to occupy in the new republic" (5). Yet such characters are more rare in children's texts. Their stories imply or directly involve the sexual exploitation of slave women, which presumably was a topic considered inappropriate for child readers

The scarcity of mulatto characters—and mulatto child characters, more specifically—suggests that children's abolitionist texts do not see these individuals as part of a nation of freedmen and women. Instead, they view that future as one with clear racial distinctions, splitting childhood into either a black or white experience. Both children's adaptations of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, for example, omit Emmeline, a fifteen-year-old quadroon girl who is sold with Tom to the evil plantation owner Simon Legree. More like Eva than Topsy, Emmeline is literate and a devout Christian. Through Emmeline, Stowe suggests that slave girlhood is not limited to wild, heathenish behaviors or a process of reform. In the children's texts, however, Emmeline's exclusion results in a

more racially polarized depiction of southern girlhood. Without a liminal character like Emmeline, girls seem to develop traits based on an essentialist heritage more than their cultural experiences. The only example of slave girlhood is Topsy—a child who suffers from her innate wickedness. Instead of having another mixed-race woman save a girl, as Cassy does for Emmeline in the original version, the children's editions remove Cassy and only show a white girl, Eva, having the ability to rescue a black girl from hardships. As a result, the gap between Eva and Topsy appears more extreme, shielding child readers from the various types of girlhood that existed in the antebellum South. This representation serves to reinforce a white supremacist perspective in which whiteness and blackness are two different entities.

Though scarce, mixed-race southern girls are not completely absent from abolitionist children's books. Published in 1862, *Step by Step; or, Tidy's Way to Freedom* traces the spiritual journey of a mulatto girl, Tidy, from her infancy when she is sold away from her enslaved mother to her childhood on various plantations. The story culminates during her young womanhood when she gains her freedom. Though the text never mentions anything about Tidy's father, the narrator identifies her mixed-race heritage through describing her physical features. For example, her "skin is not so dark but that we may clearly trace the blue veins underlying it" (ch. 2). As Tidy works for different masters, her movement between sites in the plantation household reveals how she occupies a liminal position in this network, both racially and spatially. Tidy's mobility—as well as her lack of mobility—indicates that her mixed-race status gives her privileges and opportunities that other slave girls in children's abolitionist fiction do not

have. In short, Tidy demonstrates a form of hybrid southern girlhood that combines the features of the white guardian angel girl and the black vulnerable slave girl.

In contrast to typical slave girls in abolitionist literature, such as Topsy or Maggie, Tidy has more spatial mobility throughout the entirety of the slaveholding household. As the spatial metaphor in the book's title suggests, Tidy moves "step by step," making progress where girls like Topsy in *Pictures and Stories* and Maggie in *Gertrude Lee* do not. During Tidy's early childhood, she lives in her master's "mansion" and moves between different settings inside and outside: "Every thing around her—the chickens and turkeys in the yard, the flowers in the garden, the kittens and birds in the sitting-room, and the goodies in the kitchen—added to her pleasure. She frisked and gamboled about the house and grounds as free and joyous as the squirrels in the woods" (ch. 3). Tidy's rotation between various places emphasizes her capability of being "free" like her white masters. Unlike many slaves, she does not follow race-based protocols that restrict her movement to one location where she is told to work, but she can choose where to spend her time. The particular locations mentioned in this passage also suggest that Tidy has the ability to cross racial lines because she uses master and slave space in similar ways. Tidy has access to the kitchen—a slave work space—as well as the garden and sitting room, which were places where white slaveholders held authority. For the slaves, the garden and sitting room were places of work where they served their masters, but Tidy uses these spaces for leisure pursuits, as white masters and mistresses did. She "frisked and gamboled" in these areas, which suggests that she plays and enjoys herself. Although the narrator mentions that Tidy also cleans the andirons in the sitting room, this story does not limit Tidy to only completing housekeeping chores inside the Big House

(ch. 3). At this plantation, at least, she is like Eva, Gertrude, and Gelia in that she travels between the inside and outside, as well as between master and slave spaces.

Later in the story, Tidy's hybrid status is reflected through her work in the nursery on a different plantation. When Tidy and her mistress move to the Lee family's plantation, Tidy becomes a nurse and playmate for the master's children. At ten-years-old, Tidy serves four white children close to her age and younger than her, including two girls, Amelia and Susan. In this job, Tidy's primary domain is the nursery, which is a liminal space connecting areas for white masters and black slaves. As the narrator explains, "The nursery was in the cabin of Mammy Grace, which was situated a few steps from the family mansion, and was distinguished from the log-huts of the other slaves, by having brick walls and two rooms" (ch. 5). Since the nursery is not part of the Big House, its location indicates that it has less value in the plantation's hierarchy. Its lower status classifies it as more of a slave space than the Big House: here, Mammy Grace and Tidy can have some authority as they care for the Lee children. However, the nursery is not part of the slave quarters, either, which means its close proximity of a "few steps from the family mansion" elevates it above other outbuildings on the plantation. The nursery's structure also expresses its liminal place in the plantation hierarchy. Like the quarters, it is a cabin, but it is built more sturdy with bricks instead of logs, implying a greater sense of permanence and importance. Through combining the features of slave and master space, the nursery is a space where the barriers between whiteness and blackness appear to become less rigid.

In focusing on the nursery's liminality, *Step by Step* demonstrates Tidy's hybrid qualities. She expresses traits belonging to both white and black girls in the South's

slaveholding society. Following the protocol of the slave system, Tidy cares for the baby Lemmy. She ensures that he does not injure himself by falling or by putting items in his ears and nose (ch. 5). This nursing work shapes Tidy's mobility. Tidy no longer has the freedom to go where she pleases, but she must go where the white children go so she can care for Lemmy. Tidy's mulatto status does not relieve her of this experience of slave girlhood where a white baby much younger than herself controls her daily activities and behaviors. The nursery, however, is more than a site for work because blacks and whites both live there. In the cabin, "The inner room contained the baby's cradle, a crib for the little one who had not yet outgrown his noon-day nap, her [Mammy Grace's] own bed, and now a cot for Tidy" (ch. 5). In this living space, Tidy sleeps there and spends leisure time playing with the white children. She joins Amelia and Susan in the "handling of the dolls, the tea-sets, and toys" (ch. 5). Expressing the book's abolitionist agenda, Tidy's role as playmate emphasizes the potential for slaves and white children to be companions instead of just master and slave. Tidy even learns to replicate the master class' conception of gender- specific play, thus conforming to a particularly feminine white model. Tidy's job in the nursery, therefore, enables her to participate in some experiences of slaveholding girls, such as play. Through her mixed-race status, Tidy is able to become a house slave in the nursery, which gives her privileges in the slave work hierarchy.

While Tidy has these "opportunities," she ultimately demonstrates that a mixed-race status still preserves a racial paradigm that elevates whiteness over blackness. This racial privilege becomes most apparent when contrasting Tidy with another slave girl in the story, her friend Frances. When Tidy first meets Frances, she is "performing her usual antics" by the pump in the yard (ch. 7). Here, *Step by Step* demotes blackness through

associating Frances with the yard—a location lower than the Big House on the plantation hierarchy since it surrounded the building. Unlike Tidy, Frances remains in areas designated specifically for slaves: she works the kitchen and plays in the yard. On antebellum plantations, the yard—the outbuildings and grounds in the immediate vicinity of the Big House—was often considered the domain of slave children. According to Lina Hunter, who spent her childhood enslaved on a Georgia plantation, "Chillun never had to wuk on our plantation 'til dey was big enough to go to de fields, and dat was when dey was around 12 to 14 years old. Dey jus' played 'round de yards and down by de wash-place dat was a little ways off from de big house on a branch dat run from de big spring" (259). Lina's account suggests that slave children had the opportunity to play, but they did so outside. They didn't have a choice to play in a nursery *or* in outdoor areas like white children. Frances represents this protocol when she "perform[s] her usual antics" in the yard (ch. 7). In the yard, Frances stays removed from the domain of her white masters, unlike Tidy who passes between the nursery and the yard. Through this contrast, *Step by Step* suggests that individuals with some whiteness can enter more locations, and girls with different racial heritages belong in different places on a plantation.

Step by Step uses Tidy's whiter features to elevate her above Frances. In fact, S*tep by Step* describes these characters in ways that link race with biological traits. Frances, for instance, exhibits stereotypically black characteristics: she is a "genuine, coal-black, wooly-headed, thick-lipped negro" (ch. 7). With Tidy, on the other hand, her "lips, half parted, are lovely as a rosebud; and the soft, silky curls are dewy as the flowers on this June morning" (ch. 2). By comparing Tidy's lips and mouth to flowers, this description suggests that Tidy's white heritage gives her prettier features. In this book, whiteness

means having better traits and opportunities. This privileging of white features calls attention to the book's intended audience of white children. Tidy's white traits were probably more familiar to white readers than those in Frances' description, especially for northern readers may not have grown up surrounded by slaves. By seeing how a child that looked like them was suffering in this system, readers could have realized the serious need for antislavery activism. Tidy's whiteness, therefore, could make her white readers want to become protectors of helpless slaves and teach them to view their features as better than those belonging to black individuals.

Furthermore, *Step by Step* suggests Frances particularly belongs in the yard because of innate traits. As the narrator notes, Frances is "full of the merry humor, the love of fun and frolic peculiar to her race" (ch. 7). Although this novel aims to reveal how unhappy slaves feel in bondage, this description of Frances expresses a contrasting message: it implies that slaves will be happy no matter the circumstances because that is their state of being. The word "frolic" also associates Frances with an inclination for energetic and boisterous mannerisms that are more available outside. Especially since slave quarters were fairly small and overpopulated,[20] Frances would not be able to easily frolic inside the cabin. Instead, Frances has a racially specific trait that she can only fully express in the outdoor areas of the yard where she has the room for energetic activity. Her active behavior differs from that of the white girls, Amelia and Susan, as well as Tidy when she joins them, who sit quietly and play with dolls and tea sets—both of which are completed inside the nursery. This description suggests that girls use space

[20] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese found that most slave cabins were on average one or two rooms of approximately sixteen by eighteen feet. Most cabins housed multiple slave families (149).

differently because of racial traits, which illuminates a racist subtext within the book's abolitionist mission.

As Tidy appears more similar to the white girls than to Frances in her manner of play and her spatial mobility, she complicates the distinction between white girls and black girls established in abolitionist children's literature. Tidy demonstrates facets of the white guardian angel; however, she is a guardian angel solely for herself. She does not teach, spiritually guide, or protect other slave girls. Rather, she fulfills these roles for her own benefit. Though Amelia and Susan start to teach Tidy the alphabet and attempt to establish a teacher/student dynamic, their parents forbid them to help her because slave literacy was illegal in the antebellum South. Nevertheless, Tidy teaches herself to read. When Amelia no longer wants a primer, Tidy seizes it and practices reading on her own (ch. 9). Once again, the nursery has a dual purpose as a site for work and personal activities as Tidy cleans her young mistresses' play area but keeps their discarded primer for herself. In fact, she successfully completes this subversive task because she can take shelter in the nursery and conceal her actions from her mistresses and masters, who spend the majority of their time in the Big House. Tidy guards herself by taking advantage of this opportunity to do something she enjoys. In effect, the text expresses a hybrid form of southern girlhood where Tidy is still a slave, but she has some of the same experiences and advantages as slaveholding girls. *Step by Step* gives Tidy these experiences to accentuate her potential to be free and to be more "white."

In addition to becoming literate, Tidy also suggests that a mixed-race girl can become a Christian through her own efforts. Like Topsy, Maggie, and Frances, Tidy is portrayed as a victim of the slave institution and the sinfulness it creates. Unlike the

sexual vulnerability of mixed-race women in adult antislavery texts, Tidy is vulnerable because no one has taught her about God. Yet Tidy does not need a white girl to facilitate her spiritual rescue. Instead, Tidy protects herself from sin by praying and learning about God on her own. Notably, these moments take place in outdoor settings. On most of the plantations on which Tidy lives, she does not go to the garden, fields, or other cultivated areas under the control of the white masters; rather, she retreats into more wild areas, such as the woods or the river. She leaves the established domestic space of the plantation, and by momentarily escaping the racial protocol that dictates her behaviors in certain locations, she can conduct herself however she chooses. In one instance, after Tidy has started working as a field slave, she "stroll[s] down the path which led to the cotton-field, [and] she kept on through bush and brake and wood until she reached the bank of the river" (ch. 16). The natural landscape of bushes and trees forms a physical barrier to separate her from the rules of the plantation so that she can focus on her needs instead of her master's. In this natural environment, "the toil-worn, weary girl walked, her soul in unison with the solitude and silence of the place" (ch. 16). Tidy uses this quiet environment, removed from the sounds of labor and field work, to pray and receive spiritual strength. Instead of a white girl telling her to pray or praying for her, she prays on her own, worships by singing hymns, and guides herself towards the Lord.

In doing so, Tidy saves herself from slavery and calls attention to the text's investment in whiteness. When Tidy escapes into nature to pray, she preserves her identity as someone who is not only a slave but who also thinks and feels "like" her white masters. For Tidy, natural landscapes and Christian faith is a powerful combination: they enable her to protect herself from future suffering as a slave. After praying for her

freedom, Tidy is sold to a more benevolent master whose "heart was moved to set her free" (ch. 18). The implication here is that God "moves" the master's heart to emancipate Tidy. The book uses a spatial term to signify the powerful effects of spiritual and emotional movement. Here, emotions and prayer lead to physical actions, and Tidy can leave the slaveholding household entirely.

While *Step by Step* creates a more diverse portrait of southern girlhood through Tidy's character, it still creates racially polarized types of girlhood. The girl with some whiteness is the one who develops the traits of a guardian angel, but *Step by Step* does not imply that every black girl is capable of the transformation that Tidy experiences. Frances, for instance, remains enslaved, illiterate, and sinful. Therefore, *Step by Step* expresses the pattern evident in the various editions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin, Gertrude Lee,* and *The Earnest Laborer*. These texts suggest girls who are white or have some white features can gain spiritual, intellectual, and spatial authority, which reinforces the racial protocol of the slaveholding household rather than disabling it as one might expect antislavery literature to do. This race-based protocol suggests that the abolitionist agenda of children's literature relies on white supremacist constructions of race that correlate with the same constructions shaping and shaped by the slave system.

A Girlhood Defined by Race

In depicting one of the most powerful social institutions of their era, these authors show how slavery creates different strains of girlhood that vary according to race. Yet both the angelic form of white girlhood and the victimized form of black girlhood reinforce the protocols of the slaveholding household. These protocols make proslavery and antislavery efforts seem less polarizing, especially when considering the spaces of

childhood in which these protocols are implemented. Ultimately, in using the spatial organization and protocols of the slaveholding household, these authors frame the abolitionist mission as one that sustains the racial beliefs of the antebellum South. Slaveholding and enslaved girl characters move along a spatial hierarchy that privileges the Big House, its white residents, and the beliefs of those individuals. As angels of the household, white southern girls bring white supremacist values into a larger domestic arena throughout the entirety of the plantation. Likewise, these writers differentiate between master and slave space, which creates divergent experiences of girlhood. As young female characters divide into guardian angels, suffering slaves, or somewhere in between these extremes, they identify how space and race created different opportunities for southern girls.

Proslavery domestic protocols also enable white girls to disrupt the line between childhood and adulthood. Because they control slaves, white girls gain power when they might not have that same authority in other regions where slaves were not an integral part of the home. As slaves are infantilized, fictional girl slaveholders are elevated, acquiring agency even when white girls in reality may not have had similar opportunities for power. In doing so, white girls challenge the nineteenth-century ideal of Romantic childhood as a time for adults to protect children. Rather than receiving protection, white girls are protectors. As abolitionist activists, they cross age categories and suggest that southern girlhood does not entail passively waiting for adults to take action. Instead, they should control their own lives and those of others. They overturn the notion that adults are more knowledgeable than children. Girls like Eva and Gertrude tell their mothers, fathers, and grandparents how to free slaves; girls, rather than adults, are the ones with

the "right" knowledge. Yet this knowledge and this protection operate within a white supremacist perspective. In these books, slave girls do not challenge the ideal of Romantic childhood as protected like white girls do. Slave girls do not have a sheltered childhood—even if authors like Stowe argue that they deserve that experience. These fictional slave girls have a childhood defined by physical labor, as well as physical and emotional harm. By acknowledging slave girls are victims at least to some extent and showing them as the unprotected rather than the protected, abolitionist literature differs from the types of literature examined in later chapters. Unlike the blatantly pro-southern writers, abolitionist authors call attention to the fact that slavery can have damaging effects on girls, even if abolitionist writers are doing so with racist undertones.

The line between adulthood and childhood particularly blurs when white slaveholding girls assume the role of the guardian angel. They are sometimes capable of protecting slaves in ways that adults cannot because girls can escape the emotional and spiritual restraints of adulthood. In *Gertrude Lee,* for instance, Gertrude becomes the most powerful individual on her grandfather's plantation, surpassing the control of the white, male plantation owner, when she convinces her grandfather to free his slaves. Gertrude is successful because she has spent time in the Big House and on the grounds of the plantation learning about the slave experience. Additionally, her strategy relies on sentimental power: "To her grandparents, uncle and aunt, she was alike a messenger of love—a sunbeam come to gladden the dark corners of their hearts. Tender, eloquent, earnest, and powerful were the appeals she made to their hearts; childlike simplicity, yet convincing in argument, she accomplished what her seniors, with their best efforts, failed to do" (46). By lightening "their hearts," Gertrude succeeds by changing how her

relatives feel towards slaves. Unlike adults, Gertrude has this emotional impact because of the Christian conception of "childlike simplicity." In Matthew 18:3, a verse on which Gertrude's grandfather later reflects and which Stowe repeatedly references in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Jesus tells his followers, "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (59). According to this perspective, children possess a type of pure faith that adults—male and female—do not. Gertrude's status as a child, thus, allows her to offer love that is free from sin, thus enabling her to see past the proslavery views that make "dark corners" in her family's hearts (46). Gertrude's love shields everyone from this darkness, which implies that a southern white girl's love allows her to become the most influential member of her household.

Yet by controlling the destinies of slaves, white girl characters blur age categories in ways that slave girls do not. Instead, slaves—both adult and child—remain trapped in a state of childhood. After all, Stowe claims in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that slaves of all ages have a "childlike simplicity" (275). A "childlike simplicity" produces powerful results, as the efforts of Gertrude, Gelia, and Eva demonstrate; however, white girls have the potential to be more than childlike, unlike black girls and women. When Gertrude enables emancipation and gains agency, Maggie, the slave girl whom Gertrude and her cousin teach to read, remains in a state of childlike obedience and dependency. She continues to live with Gertrude's family as hired help, thus perpetuating a system that uses race as a basis for who works and who authorizes that work. Maggie regards Gertrude now as a parent figure: Maggie "remembered her [Gertrude's] instructions as a wise child remembers those of his own father" (132). Gertrude moves into an adultlike

position, while Maggie remains a child, relying on the guidance of her metaphorical parent. Maggie also views Gertrude as more of a father than a mother, which implies that white girls can move between different categories of both age and gender. Though they now live in the North, these girls continue to express the social hierarchies of the plantation South where whiteness permits more mobility than blackness.

By focusing on characters like Gertrude in books specifically written for children, adult writers invite child readers to join them in the abolitionist cause, further blurring the line between adulthood and childhood by framing abolitionism as a mission for all ages. Consequently, the white girls in these works function as models for child readers. In the introduction to *A Peep into Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe indicates that Eva serves this purpose: "Learn of her, dear children, to be as thoughtful, as kind to every creature, however poor and lowly, as she was; learn always to speak and act kindly and gently to every one, whatever their condition in life may be, and try to do all the little good that lies in a child's power" (iv). Children like Eva can implement many "good" works, but these texts suggest that those efforts are only "good" from a white supremacist perspective. When these authors use the southern slaveholding household to shape their call for activism, they invite a particular brand of abolitionism, which does not entail simply freeing the slaves. It reproduces a nucleated antislavery mission for which the white girl abolitionists are the centers of authority, and the slaves occupy more marginal positions. Young female characters may show child readers the way to remove the chains of slaves or at least make those chains more tolerable; however, they do not eliminate the protocols that create another set of unofficial chains. These restraints are equally

damaging, centralizing whiteness and marginalizing blackness in everyday activities and interactions. This designation is what southern girls in abolitionist literature truly guard.

CHAPTER III

THE GIRL'S CAUSE: DOMESTIC SERVICE ON THE HOME FRONT IN CONFEDERATE CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

In 1864, ten-year-old Carrie Berry recorded the fall of Atlanta in her diary. On November 12, she wrote, "We were fritened [sic] almost to death last night. Some mean soldiers set several houses on fire in different parts of the town. I could not go to sleep for fear that they would set our house on fire. We all dred [sic] the next few days to come for they said that they would set the last house on fire if they had to leave this place" (Diaries). Carrie's diary illustrates how the Civil War radically changed the everyday lives of white southern girls. She lived in constant fear of losing her home and her belongings, and her future was unpredictable. As other diary entries describe shells exploding in her yard, Carrie shows how war transformed her home into a battleground. This domestic space was one of chaos and danger, differing from the nineteenth-century ideal of the middle- to upper-class home as safe and controlled—the home that the girls in abolitionist literature work to create.[21] Carrie, however, felt like a victim whose safety was threatened daily by the invading Union military.

As with Carrie's account, children's literature of this time period expresses how the lives of young people were not removed from the experience of war. During and immediately following the Civil War, the short-lived category of Confederate children's literature especially promoted the involvement of young people in the war. Like

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[21] This middle-class ideal of home was prevalent in both the North and the South. Scholars who have studied the "separate spheres" ideology of this time period, such as Nancy Cott, Nina Baym, and Amy Richter, note that the private home was often viewed as a place of refuge from more public, and potentially dangerous, spaces. Elizabeth Moss also argues that nineteenth-century southern domestic fiction constructed home as a place of organization and control, with the slave system contributing to these features (10).

Confederate texts written for adults, children's works portrayed the Confederacy as a legitimate and fully functioning nation. In textbooks, periodicals, and recreational books, southern authors used literature to help child readers understand their role in their new nation and the national conflict surrounding them. As one father tells his twelve-year-old daughter in Byrd Lyttle's *Ellen Hunter: A Story of the War*, "You will have a great deal to do, though you are but a child" (234). Texts like Lyttle's indicate that girls should help the Confederacy to thrive and win the war. In other words, fighting the war encompasses a variety of actions that are not exclusive to adults or to men and boys.

While some stories align the contributions of girls and boys, they only do so through minimal references to home front activities such as praying or cheering for the troops.[22] The three Confederate children's texts that feature girls most prominently, especially in connection with the war, suggest girls should fight the war in ways specific to their gender. Published by an anonymous author/editor called "Uncle Buddy," *Uncle Buddy's Gift Book for the Holidays* (1863) is a collection of stories, poems, academic lessons, and directions for games. It contains two short stories particularly about girls: "Helen Norcross, or The Two Friends" about two girls who learn to obey their parents during wartime and "Grandfather's Story" about a plantation owner telling his granddaughter about his youth. Next, *The Third Reader, Designed for the Use of Primary Schools* (1864) is the third installment in a textbook series by Adelaide De Vendel

[22] Examples of literature where girls and boys are involved in the war in the same ways include *The Boys and Girls Stories of the War* (1863) and *The Child's Index* periodical. In particular, see an editor's note by Samuel Boykin outlining the wartime duties of southern children in volume one, issue six. Both references are fairly brief.

Chaudron, a teacher and translator of European novels from Mobile, Alabama.[23] This book contains grammar lessons and short stories designed to specifically help southern children develop vocabulary and literacy skills. Finally, *Ellen Hunter: A Story of the War* (1868) is a book-length story that was serialized in the children's periodical *Burke's Weekly for Boys and Girls*. Written by Byrd Lyttle—the pseudonym for a relatively unknown author named E. Victoria Lomax—*Ellen Hunter* depicts a young girl in Richmond and the surrounding rural areas trying to keep her family safe as the Union army invades Virginia.[24] Through the young female characters depicted in these works, children's writers indicate that Confederate girls[25] should fight the war but in a way that detaches them from battle. Their "cause" concerns a different space: the home front.

However, these children's works and historical accounts offer two contrasting narratives of Confederate girlhood on the home front. Primary documents written during the Civil War, such as Carrie Berry's diary, and later studies by historians indicate that the spatial boundaries between home front and front lines collapsed in the wartime South.

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[23] I am not focusing on the first two installments, *The First Reader* (1863) and *The Second Reader* (1864), because they emphasize more shared experiences between boys and girls, which may result from a younger intended readership. These textbooks gradually increase in skills as the series progresses, indicating that each successive book is written for an older audience. Presumably because of these reasons, *The Third Reader* contains more references to the war and children's involvement in it, which makes it the most appropriate to use in this chapter.

[24] I have yet to uncover any information about Uncle Buddy's identity, and details about Lyttle are scarce. According to two nineteenth-century literary historians, William Cushing and Mary T. Tardy, a writer named E. Victoria Lomax used the pseudonym Byrd Lyttle and wrote for magazines, as well as one novel, *Mary Austin; or The New Home* (1870). Both Cushing and Tardy note that Lomax lived in Baltimore, but *Burke's Weekly* identifies Lyttle as a writer from Virginia. This information indicates that, whether in Maryland or Virginia, Lyttle resided in states affected by the tensions of the war, especially since these states were located near the border of the Confederacy.

[25] In this chapter, when I refer to Confederate girls, I mean white girls. As a country fighting a war to preserve white superiority, the Confederacy primarily viewed white individuals as citizens of their nation.

Conversely, Confederate children's literature maintains the distinction between these two war zones, which constructs a different experience of wartime girlhood. While living in a battleground, actual Confederate girls became casualties of war as their homes and families were endangered, but I argue that the depiction of a more stable and peaceful home front enables fictional girls to be protectors. In fact, authors position girls as an important force keeping these war zones separate, and girl characters are sometimes more effective than adults in protecting the southern home front. Rather than marching into battle like men or boys, these girls preserve these spaces and fight the war through domestic service. Domestic service encompasses a range of tasks that advance the war effort, including nursing on the home front, household chores, family responsibilities, and activities that maintain class and racial statuses. Even though a war rips apart their nation—and at times rips apart their families as fathers and brothers leave for battle—the war does not alter the domestic responsibilities of fictional girls. Through these efforts, young female characters show how domestic service is equally important to military contributions in a combat zone. In short, the ability of girls to protect the home front is crucial for the success of the Confederacy as a country and a national identity.

Confederate Children's Literature and Wartime Publishing

In the context of the Confederacy, fictional southern girls are protectors of a country instead of only a region. During the Civil War, southern children's writers contributed to a new nationalist category of children's literature; therefore, they represented a distinct version of girlhood. In the wartime South, children's literature became part of a larger cultural effort to promote the Confederacy as a legitimate nation, and writers for children and adults called for a national literature during this time period.

As the *Southern Literary Messenger* declared in October of 1861, "A nation cannot live upon bread alone. The moral and intellectual must assist the material, or the whole fabric will fail" (317). For these writers, literature—and the "intellectual and moral" ideas literature constructs—was essential for their nation's success. Confederate literature could shape a national consciousness, as critics such as Michael Bernath and Coleman Hutchison have argued in their studies of adult Confederate literature. According to Bernath, the Confederacy viewed publishing literature as part of the war effort: "Independence won on the battlefield would be meaningless so long as Confederates remained intellectually and culturally dependent upon the North" (2). Children's works were an integral part of this process. If authors could instill Confederate values in children, then those young people could sustain that national consciousness as they aged. For these authors, relaying such messages to child readers serves the Confederacy's youth, but it also serves the Confederacy as a country. Authors reinforce what values they think contribute to a Confederate identity, such as justifying slavery, and in encouraging children to adopt these views, they build patriotism that fuels the war effort. In effect, writing is one of many methods southerners used to attempt to defeat the Union. Uncle Buddy, Lyttle, and Chaudron fight the war through words like their characters fight through domestic duties.

Confederate children's literature, in particular, emerged as southern writers and publishers started to produce texts that specifically promoted the Confederacy as a nation with its own government, principles, and culture. In *Uncle Buddy's Gift Book for the Holidays*, Uncle Buddy exemplifies this desire in the book's preface: southern children should read books "better adapted to the wants and tastes of Southern boys and girls,"

while "Northern publications, with their religious and political issues, [should] be excluded altogether from Southern patronage" (4). As Uncle Buddy demonstrates, southern children's writers during the Civil War wanted child readers to understand and advocate the political, economical, social, and cultural values of the Confederacy. In general, northern and southern writers politicized children's literature during the Civil War, as critics such as James Marten and Alice Fahs have discussed.[26] When focusing specifically on southern girls in Confederate children's works, however, it becomes apparent that the politicization of these characters happens in ways determined by domestic spaces and their separation from the battlefield.

Although Confederate children's authors viewed their works as important to their country's success, only a small number of texts were produced. From 1861-1865, most Confederate books produced for children were textbooks, of which records exist for at least 111.[27] In contrast, southern publishers during the war years only produced six periodicals and ten recreational books for children, one of which was a reprint of Francis Robert Goulding's *Robert and Harold; or The Young Marooners on the Florida Coast*

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[26] Marten and Fahs are the main critics who examine Confederate children's literature, with the exception of Sarah Law Kennerly's dissertation written in 1957. Marten finds this politicization throughout children's material culture of the era, including literature, images, games, and toys (3). Focusing more specifically on literature, Fahs asserts that popular texts published during the Civil War for both children and adults "helped to shape new modes of imagining individuals' relationships to the nation" (1-2). Expanding on these critics, I examine how Confederate children's writers use domestic service to politicize southern girls and illustrate their relationships with their nation.

[27] Sarah Law Kennerly lists 111 textbooks in her catalogue of Confederate children's imprints; however, Laura Elizabeth Kopp reports that the Confederate states printed at least 136 textbooks. Since many Confederate textbooks were reprints of northern or antebellum textbooks with new titles and/or introductions, it is difficult to account for the exact number.

(1852).[28] Five of these books were fairy tales, and the other periodicals and recreational works contained short stories, poems, and religious and moral lessons. Southern children's works published in the immediate postwar years were also few in number, especially since many of the cities that contained printing presses, such as those in Virginia and Georgia, burned during the war, and the presses could no longer produce materials. Nevertheless, a few publishing companies in cities including Richmond, Nashville, Louisville, and Macon survived postwar conditions and printed religious texts and periodicals.

One of the reasons so few works of Confederate children's literature were produced is because writing and publishing in the Confederacy became a sort of battle. Largely rural, the South could not match the industrial potential of the North, and the South contained fewer paper mills and presses. Southern publishing companies fought paper and ink shortages, employees abandoning their presses to enlist, and the destruction of presses as cities burned. Due to a scarce supply of texts, coupled with an urgent desire to establish a national literature, Confederate publishers often reprinted Victorian novels and northern textbooks. By reprinting books, southern editors and writers established their credibility and knowledge of literature. *Uncle Buddy's Gift Book* and *The Third Reader*, in particular, place original stories alongside stories from Europe and the United States, thus asserting their capability of producing works equal to those in more established literary traditions.[29] Although such reprints may have been written before the

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[28] I arrived at these numbers through consulting lists of Confederate imprints compiled by Sarah Law Kennerly, as well as Michael Parrish and Robert Willingham.

[29] Uncle Buddy reprints poems and stories from other newspapers and periodicals. Some of these periodicals are specifically Confederate works, such as *The Child's Index*, but others are not. For most reprints, Uncle Buddy indicates that the story has been translated

war started, authors still reappropriated them to advance Confederate political and cultural ideals by including them in new specifically Confederate collections. This cultural work was important enough that southern publishers persevered through the challenges of wartime publishing conditions to produce texts like *Uncle Buddy's Gift Book*, *Burke's Weekly for Boys and Girls,* and *The Third Reader.*

In the period from secession to the immediate postwar years, Confederate children's literature distinguished itself by endorsing its country and its national literature as "possibilities, not merely lost causes," as Hutchison observes in his study of Confederate texts for adult readers (2). Unlike later plantation or domestic novels, Confederate literature promotes the Confederacy as successful in that present moment. For instance, Uncle Buddy aligns the Confederacy with "our forefathers…in the Revolution of 1776," implying that this new government's declaration of independence will be as successful as the American Revolution (69). Consequently, the collection does not imagine that losing the war and the country is possible, which is a view that continues into some literature published immediately after the war.

Ellen Hunter is a prime example of such a text. Lyttle ends *Ellen Hunter* by declaring, "The war is over. The cause, so nobly fought for, lost! But who shall say it is forever" (414). With this statement, Lyttle implies that the war has not permanently concluded: the ambiguous pronoun "it" suggests that both the war and the cause could return. The cause is only temporarily "lost," instead of for "forever," which reinstates the hope that the Confederacy could exist in the near future. Lyttle's focus on the future

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from another language and does not mention the original source, or he only mentions the title of the source publication without a date or any other identifying information. *The Third Reader* contains poems and stories that Chaudron labels as translations from other authors.

separates *Ellen Hunter* from postwar southern children's texts that romanticize an antebellum and Confederate past and acknowledge it will never return.[30] Lyttle's passage represents a trend among southern writers in the immediate postwar years to believe the Confederacy could still exist as a country. As Anne Sarah Rubin observes in her study of diaries, letters, newspapers, and magazines from this time period, some southerners advocated a separate nationhood, while others remained in denial about the outcome of the war as late as 1868 (144). In a postwar setting, Lyttle's vision for the Confederacy's return may seem more like a fantasy than the representations in works produced specifically during the Civil War. Nevertheless, for Lyttle, Uncle Buddy, and Chaudron, the story of this nation has yet to finish unfolding, and that story can continue through the contributions of girls.

War Zones and Domestic Space

Confederate children's literature primarily portrays white middle- and upper-class girls who serve a valuable purpose for their nation: they fight the war through their activities and behaviors on the home front. Placing girls in this setting is fairly typical for children's literature of the Civil War era, as well as for girls in adult literature. During the Civil War, writers in the North and South produced fiction and poetry that contributed to the genre of home front literature. Relying on a sentimental tradition, these works dramatize everyday life, and as Fahs has argued, they view women's emotional conflicts and responses as a central experience of war (129). Men sacrifice their lives on the

[30] Southern children's fiction written in the late nineteenth century follows this trend, especially books by Thomas Nelson Page and Louise Clarke Pyrnelle. For example, in *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot* (1882), Pyrnelle writes of a plantation childhood that "is over now" (viii). This statement contrasts with Lyttle's addendum that the "war is over" but not for "forever" (414).

battlefield, but writers represent women's sacrifices on the home front as equally important and heroic.[31] For girls, these sacrifices often involve embracing changes in daily life, as Carrie Bell Sinclair's Civil War-era song "The Homespun Dress" demonstrates. Sinclair celebrates southern girls who forgo manufactured clothes and accessories:

> The homespun dress is plain, I know,
>
> My hat's palmetto, too;
>
> But then it shows what Southern girls
>
> For Southern rights will do.
>
> We send the bravest of our land,
>
> To battle with the foe,
>
> And we will lend a helping hand—
>
> We love the South, you know. (82)

Sinclair's lyrics compare southern girls to men who enter battle because they relinquish material comforts. Choosing a homespun dress seems like a simple action, and it is not as dangerous as marching into battle, but Sinclair situates this choice as a valuable part of the war effort: it is how girls "lend a helping hand" to the soldiers (82). Confederate children's writers rely on similar tropes of everyday emotional experiences and sacrifices, yet they focus more on the process of growing up in home-front conditions. Young female characters demonstrate how the emotional choices of girls contribute to their

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[31] Women's sacrifices involve a range of experiences, but a noteworthy example is Augusta Jane Evans' bestselling Confederate novel *Macaria; or, Altars of Sacrifice* (1864), in which a young woman relinquishes her father and her lover to the battlefield. Evans presents this woman's "offering" of these men as more difficult than the legendary Macaria's sacrifice of her life to the gods to save Athens from war (329).

moral development, which allows them to become protectors of Confederate homes, citizens, and values.

For actual southern girls growing up during the Civil War, however, protecting those values was a challenging task because the home front was chaotic. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "home front" refers to "the civilian life and population of a country which is engaged in military conflict elsewhere" ("Home front"). The home front not only includes actual houses but also the everyday places of "civilian life," such as the yards around houses, shops, schools, roads, or places in towns and cities. It can also refer to factories producing materials for warfare, as long as combat is not occurring there. Yet as Thavolia Glymph notes, plantation and urban home fronts had varying needs and conditions, especially as wealthy women, lower-class yeoman women, and slaves experienced these locations differently (174). Furthermore, the meaning of home front differed in the North and South because so much fighting occurred in Confederate territory. In fact, historian Anya Jabour argues that southerners lived "on the front lines rather than on the home front" (*Topsy-Turvy* 10). Jabour also contends that southern children frequently experienced the violence and danger associated with combat, even more often than northern children (10). The Confederate home front therefore was not a uniform or static space, but one aspect remained the same no matter the specific location or conditions: southern children like Carrie Berry were not isolated from the hardships typical of battle zones.

As the line between home front and battlefield blurred, the Civil War reorganized southern domestic spaces, especially for the type of elite, white girls portrayed in Confederate children's literature. As slaves ran away and gained emancipation, these

girls completed more household chores. With fathers away fighting, girls often acquired more adult responsibility. Girls had to run homes or plantation if mothers left to nurse wounded husbands or brothers. Instead of submitting to their parents, girls assumed control of their families in these instances. In addition to increased housekeeping responsibilities, many girls experienced change as battles raged around their homes, and in some cases, destroyed their homes. Fourteen-year-old Sue Chancellor, for instance, experienced radical changes when her house became a field hospital during the battle of Chancellorsville. Domestic spatial arrangements were in flux because, as Sue explains, "they had taken our sitting room as an operating room, and our piano served as an amputating table" (141). The Union forces then sent Sue, her mother, and her siblings to the basement, controlling what food they received and when they could leave. Ultimately, as the battle moved closer, Sue and her family fled their home when it caught on fire (Chancellor 141-143). These changing conditions created a girlhood that was in flux, causing girls to become casualties of battle. Because war left her without a home, Sue could not fulfill the antebellum expectations that rooted her in that environment.

Prior to secession, white middle- to upper-class girls did not always experience the same conditions, but for the most part, southern society held the same expectations for these girls: they were defined by their duties in domestic locations, and they were supposed to practice domestic responsibilities in preparation to be wives and mothers. As Victoria Ott explains, "As children in the Old South, [girls] learned from their mothers, clergy, and educators to accept the ideals that lauded female devotion to domesticity, purity, piety, and submissiveness" (5). In addition, while training to become wives of southern white men, white girls learned from their own mothers how to become slave

mistresses. They needed to interact properly with slaves to maintain the "prescribed model of race relations" (Ott 15). For southern white girls from higher social classes, this "prescribed model" comprised the only acceptable option for their life as adults. In effect, southerners hoped girls would fulfill the "myth of the southern lady," a term that many critics, such as Mary Louise Weaks and Anne Goodwyn Jones, have identified as the ideal for white southern women during this time period. According to Jones, this ideal functioned as a foundational aspect of southern society (4). Thus, raising girls to achieve these ideal domestic standards was integral for the future success of this society. The plantation system could effectively continue if girls became women who could manage the household, serve their husbands and children, and reinforce racial hierarchies. Ensuring the continuance of this type of girlhood was a reason to defend the South, which gave girls both actual and symbolic value.

During the Civil War, however, this "model" for girls became less "prescribed" as girls actively contributed to this national conflict. Historians debate the extent to which the Civil War changed prewar gender standards, but in many ways, the Civil War instigated "a crisis in gender," as Lee Ann Whites terms it (2).[32] For southern girls, the war brought a range of new opportunities. In particular, older girls in their teen years obtained employment: for example, the *Richmond Examiner* trained girls to be reporters; many became teachers; others started nursing (Ott 95-96). With these jobs, girls

[32] For instance, Drew Gilpin Faust (in *Southern Stories*) and Libra Hilde argue that the Civil War allowed southern women to become more involved in experiences traditionally regarded as masculine. Likewise, Ott asserts that the war brought transformative experiences to girls and young women, but girls also tried to maintain antebellum perceptions of gender. However, in *Scarlett's Sisters*, Anya Jabour contends that young women during the war continued trends of gender resistance that already existed in the antebellum period.

increasingly entered more public spaces outside of their homes. As a result, girls still functioned in a serving role, but they now supported their nation in addition to their family or their parents. The fact that some girls gained new jobs and contributed to the economy because of the war suggests that prewar attitudes concerning gender and space shifted at least to some degree.

Additionally, the domestic model of white, middle- to upper-class girlhood became harder to attain as the home front and battlefield merged. Carrie Berry's account of the siege of Atlanta particularly reveals how the Civil War forced southern girls to alter their daily routines. Carrie writes about trying to complete basic domestic chores, such as ironing, knitting, cooking, and caring for her younger sister; however, the war frequently halts these activities. In an entry on August 15, 1864, she notes that her family must "fly to the cellar" after a shell explodes in her yard (Diaries). Carrie cannot iron or cook when she repeatedly has to seek shelter in the cellar. As the siege continues, food shortages keep Carrie and the other women in her home from cooking and providing food for the family. Then, Carrie lives in fear of her home burning, which would leave her bereft of a space to fulfill domestic responsibilities. Like Sue Chancellor, Carrie could not escape the fears of destruction and death that soldiers encounter on the battlefield. From adjusting to these dangers to relying less on parents, these historical accounts reveal how the Civil War profoundly changed domestic spaces for many girls.

When viewed in the context of Sue's or Carrie's story, though, Confederate children's literature offers a different portrait of the war. Schoolbooks, fiction, and periodicals do not hide the gruesome or potentially frightening details of battle from their readers, but they do keep the home front separate from the battlefield. *Uncle Buddy's Gift*

Book for the Holidays offers the most drastic departure from the historical accounts. To create an image of a seemingly utopian, antebellum environment, Uncle Buddy reprints stories that depict girls unmarred by war or serious trauma, such as "Grandfather's Story" by Ethel Watland, which Uncle Buddy labels as a reprint from a publication called *The Fly-Leaf*. In "Grandfather's Story," a young girl, Mary, sits in her garden with her grandfather to hear stories about his youth, and they enjoy this "Sylvan retreat" (36). Instead of having fire or enemy invaders disrupt the peace of home, "the breeze came moaning through the moss, fragrant with breath of the pine" (36-37). This garden setting suggests that the South is a comforting place far away from the spoils of battle. The "moaning" of the breeze is certainly less life-threatening than the "moaning" of exploding artillery or wounded soldiers. This depiction continues the trend of prewar southern fiction to present the plantation as an Edenic environment, yet Uncle Buddy's reappropriation suggests that an agrarian vision of a beautiful, peaceful home can thrive even in the midst of war.

This plantation is so peaceful, according to Uncle Buddy, because slavery remains intact and the plantation operates by white supremacist protocols. Rather than fleeing to Union lines, the "Negroes [sing] gaily at the wood yard" (37). This description implies that the slaves are happy in their servitude. Because slaves perform the labor, Mary and her grandfather can sit uninterrupted in the garden. The grandfather has time to improve her character through didactic storytelling since he does not need to complete physical labor on the plantation. Additionally, slavery permits Mary to enjoy a girlhood of leisure. Because she does not have to cook or clean, she can spend countless hours sitting in this garden and daydreaming "bright dreams of what I should do when I reached the golden

land of womanhood" (37). The word "golden" implies that womanhood is a wonderful age that all girls should aspire to reach, and an idyllic future on a plantation, where women have the opportunity to live in a "golden" environment, will only be possible if the Confederacy wins the war. By dreaming, Mary indicates that girls can preserve the Confederacy through imagining a peaceful vision of the future, just as children might envision the Confederacy while reading this story. Thus, Uncle Buddy uses "Grandfather's Story" to emphasize the home front as a safe location that enables the type of girlhood he hopes child readers will value and aspire to maintain.

Reprints with unknown publication dates, such as "Grandfather's Story," were possibly written before the war and could not reference battles and war zones; however, two of the short stories Uncle Buddy wrote specifically for the collection—"The Young Confederate Soldier" and "Helen Norcross, or The Two Friends"—emphasizes the importance of separating the home front from the battlefield in a time of war. "The Young Confederate Soldier" shows a fourteen-year-old boy named Johnny who enlists in a Confederate regiment and captures Union soldiers, while Helen Norcross and her friend Alice stay in their town and sew items for soldiers. In these stories, Uncle Buddy splits these war zones according to gender, and boys and girls experience the war and serve the Confederacy in different ways. Uncle Buddy begins "Helen Norcross" by reinforcing this gender division: "I have given the boys a story—and a war story, at that. I now propose to give one for the girls—and it must be a peace story" (17). These clarifications, situated after the dashes, suggest that Uncle Buddy expects girls and boys to read about different topics. Intensifying this intention, he uses different language in the boy's explanation and the girl's explanation. The phrase "a war story, at that" seems more casual: the boys are

merely fortunate to have this particular topic out of the many topics that exist. On the other hand, only one topic is available for girls: they "must" have a peace story. In effect, boys unquestionably belong in war, but girls belong in a calmer, less violent setting more distanced from the war the boys experience.

Uncle Buddy's gender separation in this explanation reflects a trend of nineteenth-century authors to divide children's literature into gendered categories. Boys' books often involved adventure, danger, and travel, while girls' books portrayed domesticity and moral virtues. As Gail Schmunk Murray explains, these boys' adventure novels emphasized plot and setting, and girls' domestic fiction concentrated more on character development (52). *Uncle Buddy's Gift Book* includes these patterns. Fourteen-year-old Johnny in "The Young Confederate Soldier" goes to a dangerous battle in Virginia where "the ground was covered with the killed and wounded of both armies" (15). In contrast, Helen Norcross helps her friend Alice learn about friendship and obedience in their town. Both northern and southern children's literature produced during the Civil War follow these conventions for genre and gender, which results from their shared literary tradition prior to the war.[33] By using a pattern that would have been familiar to nineteenth-century child readers, Confederate writers like Uncle Buddy implies that the Confederacy can produce literature comparable to prewar and northern works. With stories like Johnny's and Helen's, southern children do not need to remain dependent on northern fiction for tales of adventurous boys and moral girls. By

[33] In northern children's literature, Harry Castlemon's *Frank on a Gunboat* (1864) and its many sequels are good example of boys' wartime adventure stories. The series traces a boy's journey in the Union navy stationed along the Mississippi river. Unlike Frank who travels to participate in battles, most northern girls contribute to the war from home. For instance, Nelly in Louisa May Alcott's "Nelly's Hospital" (1865) helps her brother recover from his war injuries at home by creating a hospital for pets.

delineating boys and girls in this manner, Uncle Buddy emphasizes how Confederate girls and boys serve their nation differently. Boys fight through combat in new locations, while girls fight through developing a strong, moral character that will sustain them—and their loved ones—through this conflict.

Generally, girls in nineteenth-century children's literature cultivate proper temperaments and behaviors; however, southern girls often experience this character growth because of rural homes, while those areas have less impact on northern girls. In this way, Confederate literature is similar to abolitionist texts. For instance, Chaudron's textbook *The Third Reader* demonstrates how this location helps girls become stronger physically and emotionally, especially during peaceful conditions. To encourage children to pronounce words associated with a rural life, such as "farm" and "lawn," Chaudron uses a story about a girl also named Mary to represent these images, thus linking youth, femininity, and the outdoors (21). In "Mary's Home," a girl and her parents prepare to move from a town to a farm. While visiting the new property, Mary decides to "have a romp" on the lawn and rest in the arbor (21). She acquires a cow, which she will care for so that it will "come to know and love her" (22). With the cow, Mary gains increased responsibility for maintaining the farm, like many Civil War-era girls who helped run their homes; however, Mary does not suffer from food shortages or Union raids, so she has the ability to forge a personal connection with her cow. Mary has a pet instead of livestock, which teaches her important qualities such as compassion and nurturing. Because of this peaceful home front, Mary can "be a good girl" (22). By engaging in athletic, outdoor activity and caring for the cow, Mary becomes "good" in both physical and emotional ways that are only possible on the landscape of the farm. "Mary's Home"

does not explicitly mention the war, but physical and emotional strength are important qualities in a time of war when soldiers and civilians suffer from physical and emotional ailments. Because rural life is so beneficial, Chaudron imagines the home front as a specifically agrarian space. This agrarian setting makes a stable home life possible, which enables girls to thrive instead of become casualties in a battleground.

Continuing the spatial pattern in Uncle Buddy's and Chaudron's books, *Ellen Hunter: A Story of the War* also separates the war zones to emphasize girls as protectors instead of victims. As the story begins, Ellen is a twelve-year-old girl with two brothers who have enlisted, and she fears her father, who is a doctor, will leave to treat wounded men in the Confederate army. In spite of these concerns, though, Ellen tells her father, "I wish I was a man. Then I could go and fight with the boys" (235). Although Ellen's masculine desire initially appears subversive, Lyttle demonstrates that girls do not belong on the battlefield. Enlistment is a line that Ellen cannot cross, and Ellen's desires need to change. As Ellen's father, Dr. Hunter, replies, "You will have your share of duty, too, Ellie. If I am not very much mistaken, the women of the South are to see as great privations and trials as the men" (235). He also identifies Ellen's "duty": she will need to "cheer" her mother and "look after" her younger siblings when her father and brothers leave (234-235). Through this explanation, Dr. Hunter acknowledges that the war will impact both men and women, but they must respond to these intrusions in different ways according to their gender: men leave home, while women remain in that space. Yet both of these spaces will bring equally trying and painful experiences. In addition, each war zone has specific responsibilities for the individuals in them. In battle, men offer physical

strength through fighting, and at home, women and girls provide emotional strength through attending to the family.

Though redirected towards the home, Ellen's desire to impact the war in masculine ways was not unheard of for girls during the Civil War. Eighteen-year-old Elizabeth Collier writes in her diary about not being able to fight: "I am but a feeble woman, would God I were a man" (qtd. in Ott 47). Ott observes that young women typically echo Elizabeth's views, finding the home front a "substitute, albeit a poor one, for fighting alongside their male counterparts" (47). Likewise, some girls in northern children's literature of this time period express similar sentiments. For instance, Jo March in *Little Women* declares, "I'm dying to go and fight with papa, and I can only stay at home and knit like a poky old woman" (Alcott 13). As these examples suggest, some girls both in reality and in literature see their gender limiting their contributions to the war, and they are not especially happy about women's tasks. They cannot accomplish as much as the men if they are "feeble" and "poky." Some northern authors portray girls enjoying their knitting more than Jo does, suggesting that northern children's literature of this era revealed a range of responses to domestic work, many of which challenged and questioned prewar domestic expectations for girls.[34]

In contrast, responses to girls' domestic work in Confederate children's literature appear to be more uniform. Southern authors diverge from both historical and northern literary accounts by showing how feminine domestic work increases the opportunity for

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[34] For instance, in *Kate Morgan and Her Soldiers* (1862) by the American Sunday School Union, the anonymous author describes a scene of women sewing uniforms for soldiers and uses battle imagery to express the nobility of this activity (130). However, feminine duties are still somewhat of a limitation because Kate remarks, "I would go [fight with the men], if I could" (125).

girls to fight the war in meaningful ways. For southern girls, their gender is less of a hindrance and more of an asset, as Ellen Hunter's conversation with her father typifies. By labeling Ellen's caregiving a "duty," Lyttle denotes that domestic work is not inferior to or less noble than fighting in the military (235). Rather, it is merely another type of service to the Confederacy. If Ellen can preserve peace and order in her home, then her father can worry less about her mother or younger siblings when he is attending wounded soldiers, which will help him better focus on his duty at the hospital. Ellen's instructions here suggest why Uncle Buddy and Chaudron place girls in peaceful settings: these southern girls fight the war through sustaining and restoring the home as a safe, stable environment. In emphasizing this duty, Confederate children's authors suggest that both war zones—the home front and the battlefield—need to remain separate because victories on both fronts are necessary to win the war.

Class and Race on the Home Front

Primarily, Confederate children's authors create a home front with a white, elite version of girlhood, unlike the racial and class variety in abolitionist, plantation, and family stories. Most of the girls in *Uncle Buddy's Gift Book* have fathers who own plantations or farms, and Ellen Hunter's father is a doctor in Richmond. Similarly, in *The Third Reader*, Chaudron frequently encourages her child readers to help the less fortunate. For instance, one lesson states, "Let us never forget to give alms to the poor" (77). Such comments imagine a child reader in a higher social class with the ability and material goods necessary to provide that assistance. Poor white girls rarely appear in these works, and when they do, they are minor characters, or they function to accentuate other characters' moral virtues instead of their own traits. Ellen Hunter, for instance, tells

a story about a poor girl, but this social class only exists in her fictional world—not in the reality Ellen experiences. The girl in Ellen's story only serves as amusement for Ellen and her younger siblings (227). Uncle Buddy's collection contains a few stories that mention girls from a lower social class, but these stories typically focus on the girls' brothers or, as in "The Little Wanderers," a wealthy plantation owner. A "rich old gentleman" adopts a homeless boy and girl, becoming "happy" because he finds "something to care for and to love" (28, 30). Thus, "The Little Wanderers" emphasizes the benevolence of the rich, rather than the trials of the poor. This plantation system can afford to be generous, providing homes and loving families for impoverished children.

In addition to offering a limited depiction of poor girls, Uncle Buddy, Lyttle, and Chaudron fail to depict black girls. Whenever the stories contain black characters, they are adult slaves. Most prominently, the slaves are stereotypical mammies, such as Ellen Hunter's Aunt Polly, who supports the Confederacy and prefers to remain a slave. The depiction of adult mammies rather than slave girls suggests that Confederate writers envision their nation as one where girls form inter-generational relationships between races, instead of interracial bonds between the same generation of individuals. Differing from abolitionist, plantation, and family stories, Confederate girls look for the assistance of older slaves, rather than the companionship of those their age. In general, references to southern girls in connection to slave children are rare in Confederate children's literature. As an exception, one short story, "Nellie Lester" by Mrs. L. N. Boykin in the periodical *The Child's Index*, briefly describes the white protagonist Nellie, "with a troop of little negroes admiringly following her, bustling about the yard and kitchen, feeding the chickens or looking after the meals" (n. pag.). It is unclear whether these "little negroes"

are boys or girls, yet Boykin only mentions these children to draw focus to Nellie. As Nellie goes to the yard and kitchen—sites of slave labor—she appears like an ideal mistress who does not let her slaves toil and complete all the labor. Because she feeds the chickens and lets the slaves watch, she seems like a benevolent master and, thus, the object of the slaves' affection. Indeed, the accompanying illustration of Nellie's feeding the chickens does not contain any slave children, which implies that Nellie's finishing her chores like a good daughter is the important part of this moment. Like many settings in Confederate children's literature where it would make sense for slaves to exist, "Nellie Lester" removes and deemphasizes racial diversity to foreground white girls as the center of Confederate society.

By concentrating on a white, elite version of girlhood, Confederate children's authors continue to depict the home front as a place where girls are not victims. Many black girls lived in the Confederacy, mostly as slaves, but their omission suggests that these authors do not want to draw attention to what northerners, especially abolitionists, identified as abusive conditions. Further concealing actual circumstances, these authors do not use the word "slave"; most commonly, they use "servant" or "negro." In "Hugh and Ellen" in *The Third Reader*, a "maid" serves tea to a girl and her cousin (17). Both "servant" and "maid" imply that these individuals are paid employees and hide the fact of enforced servitude. Consequently, this narrow, white-centric perception of black characters romanticizes the South as a favorable environment where the races coexist in harmony.

Paula Connolly makes similar observations in her study of Confederate textbooks, asserting that the minimal references to slavery suggest that slavery exists in the

"background to Southern life, both expected and unremarkable" (80). Indeed, slavery appears as a staple of southern life that children should accept; however, I would add that the tendency to prioritize white, elite girls to the (almost) complete erasure of slave girls occurs in service to the Confederate war effort. In fact, both *Uncle Buddy's Gift Book* and *Ellen Hunter* do not draw much attention to slavery, and they do not express the reality that the war was being fought over slavery. Instead, Uncle Buddy and Lyttle emphasize that the Confederacy is fighting to defend states' rights. As Ellen's father tells her, "Every State has the right to make its own laws….Now, the Northern people say we have no right to do this…and we say, that sooner than allow this, we will fight for our rights, and keep them by force" (234). Slavery is, of course, the primary right the southern states want to keep, but Ellen's father fails to mention this fact. Writers like Lyttle and Uncle Buddy possibly avoided mentioning slavery out of concern that child readers would question the ethics of this caste system, which in turn could decrease their patriotism. Perhaps these adult writers feared that the loyalties of child readers could shift, especially when there were less authority figures at home to teach children southern values. The omission of slave girls could suggest how deeply the Confederacy depended upon the support of its child citizens. When fathers and brothers are dying on battlefields to preserve this society, visions of a white aristocracy that remains in control functions to help children understand that their family members are not dying in vain. To perpetuate the Confederate cause, then, Uncle Buddy, Chaudron, and Lyttle conceal potentially problematic aspects of the South and focus on a type of girlhood with which their white, middle- and upper-class readers can identify. When reading about a familiar world, girls

can more feasibly imagine themselves contributing to the war in the ways portrayed in these stories.

"Good Acts": Fighting through Domestic Service

As Confederate children's literature foregrounds elite, white girls, writers demonstrate why keeping the home front separate from the battlefield is important: it enables this type of girl to be a protector of the Confederacy instead of a casualty of war. The nation depicted in these stories needs more than just military service to defend its values, institutions, and citizens. Domestic service provided by girls is equally essential for preserving the country. One valuable type of domestic service involves producing items for the soldiers, which *Uncle Buddy's Gift Book* represents in "Helen Norcross, or The Two Friends." In this short story, two girls, Helen and Alice, are expected to go to the Hall of the Ladies' Association to help by "sewing up garments for the soldiers, knitting socks for them, and doing various other good acts for the comfort of the Confederate army" (17). Although Alice misbehaves and decides to play with a friend rather than attend the Ladies' Association meeting, Helen is the model of a "good" girl in that she arrives and completes these "good acts" (19, 17). Because she is not directly involved in combat and has the time and a place to complete this needlework, Helen contributes to the success of the war. Indeed, these knitters and sewers form a group to collectively protect the citizens of their country as an army does.

Although it was common for women and girls to help the war effort through domestic tasks, Uncle Buddy suggests that domesticity allows Helen to protect the Confederacy in ways as valuable as the soldiers. While soldiers attempt to provide physical safety from invading northerners, as well as economic and political security

through creating a new nation, Helen provides material protection. Clothing and socks are essential items to defend soldiers from potential health-related conditions experienced in camp, while travelling, and on the battlefield. A decent pair of socks, for instance, provides warmth and makes marching long distances less painful. Thus, domestic acts are not just morally or patriotically beneficial; they are critical for the survival of the soldiers. These acts enhance the soldiers' abilities in battle and further protect Confederate citizens. Through nurturing the variety of needs that the soldiers have, Helen gives a feminine form of protection that strengthens the entire Confederacy. Helen can only offer this particular defense because she joins the Ladies' Association and stays in a peaceful space designated for women.

By emphasizing home front locations, "Helen Norcross" also indicates that girls can best preserve the Confederacy's social structures, especially family roles, when they stay in these places. As good Confederate citizens, girls should be dutiful daughters and obey their parents. To express this lesson, the mothers of Helen and her friend Alice tell the girls to go to the Hall of the Ladies' Association, which suggests that in serving their country, the girls are also serving their parents. Alice, however, disobeys and receives "a severe punishment." When she decides to meet a friend instead of attend the Ladies' Association meeting, the band from a military regiment spooks a horse, who knocks her into the street, and a wagon runs over her (18). Here, violence results from Alice's wrong actions, unlike the violence forced upon girls like Carrie Berry and Sue Chancellor. This moment demonstrates the dangerous consequences for disobeying parental authority: girls should do as their mothers tell them, or they will be seriously injured. Moreover, this encounter with the regiment emphasizes the text's division between girls and military

spaces. When the components of battle, such as marching soldiers, enter the home front, civilians can be harmed, and Alice would have remained safer if she had arrived at the Ladies' Association, rather than wander through the streets without supervision. Her doctor expresses this lesson during Alice's recovery. When Alice regains consciousness, the doctor reprimands her: "now, if you had not disobeyed your good mother, and had gone to the Hall, you would not be lying on your back, suffering, as you are" (18). Even in a time of war, girls cannot neglect adhering to family hierarchies. This obedience lesson frames the home front as a place where girls develop strong moral values through parental interactions, rather than as a place missing family members or shifting family structures. These girl protectors do not challenge age barriers, yet in a time of war, obeying authority figures crucially impacts life and death situations.

The messages about obedience in "Helen Norcross" differ from those in "The Young Confederate Soldier," revealing how the spaces for Confederate girls contrast with those for Confederate boys. Like Helen and Alice, fourteen-year-old Johnny Williams learns the value of obedience when he enlists in the army, but Uncle Buddy frames Johnny's lesson in militaristic terms: a "soldier's first duty is obedience; and a disobedient boy could not make a good soldier" (14). Therefore, the girls learn to submit to their parents, but Johnny learns to submit to his superiors in the army. Both types of obedience have high stakes—Alice is knocked unconscious and Johnny could be injured or killed in battle if he does not follow orders—but these duties suggest that boys and girls should not act similarly. Uncle Buddy's delineation of types of obedience situates girls firmly within family structures and allows boys to leave their families to fight in the war. Ultimately, though, both types of obedience are important because they preserve the

Confederacy. Johnny keeps Yankee soldiers from conquering the South, while Alice and Helen maintain family structures, which keeps the home front stable and similar to prewar conditions.

Although isolated from the battlefield, Alice's injury creates experiences that parallel those happening to soldiers. Like a wounded soldier, Alice becomes dependent on the care of others around her, which allows Helen to adopt another type of domestic service that was important to the war effort: nursing. Helen sits "nearly all the time by the bedside of her suffering little friend, reading to her, or conversing with her, and endeavoring to make her as comfortable as possible" (18). Similar to Helen's earlier efforts to bring "comfort" to soldiers through preparing clothing for them, Helen now applies that same kindness to her friend (17). Through providing comfort, Helen improves the lives of others and helps them to endure difficult circumstances, which compares to a nurse's duties. In a world where the home front remains separate from the battlefield and where girls stay in domestic places, nursing a friend is the only type of nursing available to Helen. She can learn these valuable skills so that she can provide comfort to family and friends who return home from battle when the war ends. Helen's nursing is also gender specific: she does not assist with the medical examinations that the male doctor completes, but she offers emotional comfort through talking with Alice. This emotional protection is powerful in that Helen helps Alice to become a "changed girl" (19). Although Helen's nursing does not directly influence the war, it creates an image of the Confederacy as a place that contains virtuous girls and transforms those who need to be more virtuous, like the newly "changed" Alice. Furthermore, Helen's care ensures that Alice is now equipped to better protect her family and her country if the need arises.

Alice can join Helen in preserving a thriving home front by attending to emotional health, rather than just physical health.

Helen and Alice's relationship also highlights Uncle Buddy's use of common patterns in nineteenth-century girls' domestic fiction, a genre to *Ellen Hunter* and some stories in *The Third Reader* also belong. Books in this genre often depict a young female character who functions as a moral and emotional guide for those around her. These figures appeared in works published before and after the Civil War, such as Ellen Montgomery in *The Wide, Wide World* (1852) or Beth March in *Little Women* (1868). In this way, the Confederate girl shares features with literary representations of American girls in other regions. Through juxtaposing Alice's disobedience with Helen's obedience, Uncle Buddy illustrates the redemptive possibilities of such "good" girls. Helen is a model for Alice: she does as her mother tells her and attends the Ladies' Association meeting, and she cares for her friend when Alice is injured. Consequently, Alice becomes reformed and tells Helen, "I will now endeavor to be worthy to be the companion of so good a girl as you are" (19). By using the figure of the good girl, Uncle Buddy suggests that Confederate girls, like those in other fiction of this time period, are also morally and behaviorally good. This southern society creates virtuous girls who can improve the lives of their country's citizens because of the war.

Similarly, Alice's transformation relies on the trope of illness and/or physical injury as discipline for young characters. In many nineteenth-century children's works, illness and injury become a "metaphor for dependency and weakness" and provide "time for reflection and learning," as Lois Keith argues (14). Alice's disobedience is a weakness in her character, and after her injury, she learns that disobedience only causes

"suffering," both for her and her mother (18). Indeed, Alice's mother has "lost so many sleepless nights" caring for her daughter (19). In deciding to be like Helen, Alice realizes that her actions influence others, and she should impact others in positive ways, which is an appropriate lesson during wartime. She could have applied that principle to her work at the Ladies' Association so she could assist the soldiers. Through disciplining Alice in this manner and focusing on her development into a less selfish character, Uncle Buddy positions the Confederacy as a place of moral growth. As he does with separating stories into gendered categories, Uncle Buddy uses a common representation of girlhood to promote the Confederacy alongside northern literature. The North is not the only place where young female characters can develop "good" behaviors and where girl readers can potentially replicate those tendencies.

Like *Uncle Buddy's Gift Book*, Chaudron's *The Third Reader* shows how a stable home front allows girls to become more morally virtuous, but this textbook more clearly delineates moral virtue as a trait of middle- and upper-class girls. In one story, "Rich and Poor," Chaudron introduces Ada, a girl whose father has enlisted and left home. Ada goes with her mother to bring food to a "poor, sick woman" and her three children after this woman's husband was killed in battle (13). Ada remarks, "Papa says that we must see that the soldiers' wives and children do not suffer this winter" (14). The instructions from Ada's father portray the Confederacy as a community where the most fortunate help the less fortunate. Through collected efforts, they must help everyone survive the war, which promotes national unity. Similar to Helen, Ada can adopt the duties of a nurse. Even though this "poor" family suffers emotionally at the loss of their father and husband, Ada can bring them food and clothes so they do not suffer physically in the cold

winter (14). Furthermore, in having Ada's father direct her to helping the soldiers' families, Chaudron aligns with Uncle Buddy in situating the wartime domestic service of girls as a form of parental obedience. This connection positions the family as a central institution of the Confederacy. By following her father's orders, then, Ada demonstrates how the efforts of Confederate girls can help other families shift from the uncertainty of wartime loss into more stable conditions.

Yet through Ada, Chaudron reinforces class differences on the Confederate home front. Since Ada is the one who provides food and clothes to the dead soldier's family, Chaudron implies that she has a higher class status than the "poor" family who does not have these items, although it is not clear whether Ada belongs to the middle or upper class (13). Nevertheless, because a higher-class family is not the one to suffer, Chaudron privileges elite individuals. After all, only the poor family loses a father; Ada's father is presumably still alive since he delivers her instructions in the present tense. In this Confederacy, only the poor become war casualties, which is typical for most of Chaudron's stories. Consequently, Chaudron implies that a war cannot dissolve social classes, and the war even separates the classes further. However, these divisions do not cause conflicts. As Ada demonstrates, this class structure enables the more affluent individuals, including girls, to protect its weakest members.

In fact, Chaudron suggests this class system is especially useful because it allows for elite southerners to enter a variety of home front spaces. Girls, in particular, can care for more people, and they can uphold values of Christian benevolence in those locations. When Ada wonders how rich people can serve God, her mother tells her, "We can help with our hands, and with kind words. We can nurse the sick, comfort those who have

sorrow, and be so good to others, that when they see us coming, they feel as you do when you see the sunshine" (15). Like Uncle Buddy, Chaudron suggests that providing physical and emotional "comfort" is a way for southern girls to be "good," yet Chaudron adds Christianity to the ideal southern girl's features. When Ada nurses others, it "gives [her] a chance to please Him" (15). Ada's mother also tells her that Christian nurturing tasks are a better contribution to people and to God than "money, food, and clothes" (15). This contrast takes on special meaning when considered in the context of the Civil War. Southern girls living through the Civil War could not offer "money, food, and clothes" because such items were difficult to obtain in the Confederacy, particularly in 1864 when Chaudron published *The Third Reader*. Three years into the war, southern home front conditions worsened as money decreased in value, food shortages affected all social classes, and the Union blockade halted commerce, including material goods and clothing. These markers of class status were starting to disappear, especially where Chaudron lived in Mobile, a coastal city that had been feeling the effects of the blockade since May 1861 (Bergeron 64). Even in these conditions, Chaudron felt it was important to offer services like Ada's mother describes, and she helped organize the Mobile Military Aid Society, which made uniforms and bandages for soldiers, supplied clothing and food to families of soldiers, and assisted soldiers stationed in the city (Bergeron 94). In "Rich and Poor," Chaudron adds girls into this undertaking. The aid efforts perpetuate the idea that some individuals have more than other individuals, which maintains the illusion of the Confederate home front as a place where its class structures remain intact. While this vision of the Confederacy expresses a white, elite perception, it constructs the

Confederate girl as a figure who fights the war by preserving the culture of her nation. In short, she maintains the religious and social standards of her country's ruling class.

Chaudron generally depicts girls promoting cultural values in actual houses or yards, but *Ellen Hunter: A Story of the War* by Byrd Lyttle extends the home front beyond those borders. Most notably, Ellen volunteers at the Richmond hospital where her father works as a doctor. Wartime conditions enable Ellen to move from the private home into this more public location, yet Lyttle depicts this hospital more like a home, rather than a space directly connected to battle. For example, Ellen notices "the stillness of the ward" (254). The narrator explains, "With the exception of an occasional groan from some sufferer, there was no noise to be heard" (254). These descriptions of quiet give the hospital a peaceful atmosphere, unlike the chaos of Civil War hospitals where men had limbs amputated or died painful deaths. Here, the patients can seek refuge from the horrors they experienced while in combat. Because of these features, the hospital is also a stable place into which a girl can safely enter and extend the emotional care she has learned at home.

By placing Ellen in the hospital, Lyttle increases the range and impact of the Confederate girl protector. Though not an official nurse, Ellen still completes many duties associated with this job. Primarily, she cares for an injured officer named Colonel Williams by talking to him and reading letters from his daughter. In fact, when noticing how much he misses his daughter, Ellen resolves to "try and take his little daughter's place" (255). As a substitute daughter, Ellen fulfills a task that only she can complete through her status as a girl. She demonstrates how girls can use their youth and their daughterly devotion to boost morale among soldiers and help them recover. Because of

Ellen, Colonel Williams' health improves, and his "face brightened up as he spoke to Ellie" (255). She restores a family structure for the Colonel, which allows him to become more engaged in life as he talks to her and hears her read letters from his family (283). Although Ellen previously wants to march into battle with her brothers, her performance as a daughter reveals how her opportunities to fight the war increase when she stays on the home front. Ellen's feminine, familial role brings more aid to the soldiers than if she were to join them on the battlefield. If fighting, she might die or become injured and helpless like the men in the hospital, but as a nurse, Ellen has the ability to help throughout the war's duration. Through emotionally protecting men like Colonel Williams, Ellen facilitates recovery and enables the men to return to the battlefield or to their loved ones at home, thus sustaining her country's people.

Though volunteer work takes girls into new locations, Lyttle also expresses how the protocols of home still dictate the behaviors and movements of Confederate girls. Indeed, the home front is not as stable without smoothly functioning houses maintaining prewar lifestyles and behaviors. Although family structures shifted during the Civil War as fathers left for the battlefield, Lyttle creates a vision of the Confederacy where Ellen's immediate family remains relatively intact. As a result, Ellen learns that she must obey her parents, which correlates with the lessons in *Uncle Buddy's Gift Book* and *The Third Reader*. For instance, when Ellen wants to go into town with her friend Kate, Ellen's mother asks her to remain at home, exclaiming, "I wish, Ellen, you could stay at home sometimes. Every day you go off to the hospital and leave me here sick and alone, and now you are going to some other place, and there is no telling when you will be at home again" (278). In this passage, Ellen's mother does not try to shelter her from the

gruesome aspects of war at a hospital or in the streets of Richmond, but her mother ensures that Ellen follows her father's instructions to care for her mother. While Ellen's service at the hospital is valuable, it is only necessary as long as she does not neglect her mother. Family duties, therefore, take precedence over other types of domestic service, and nursing her sick mother is more important than nursing Colonel Williams. Although Lyttle does not present Ellen's mother as a particularly positive figure, especially since she spends the majority of the story sick in bed due to an unnamed "delicate" condition, Ellen still follows her mother's commands (221). Ellen then stays home without complaints or protests. In this home front, even a weak mother deserves obedience, and submission to parental authority is essential for Ellen to protect cultural values concerning hierarchical family relationships.

In addition to upholding these protocols, Ellen also represents how southern girls should protect their families' safety when the war intrudes into domestic spaces. In the middle of the story, Ellen's father receives orders to leave Richmond and serve the army as a doctor in the country, so he moves the family to a nearby farm so that he can be near them (354). This rural location is not quite as peaceful as those in *Uncle Buddy's Gift Book* and *The Third Reader* because the Hunter family learns that northern troops will journey through their property, and they should "expect raiding parties every moment" (378). Yet because the Hunters no longer live in a city where neighbors and friends might be in close proximity, Ellen has the opportunity to assume the role of the protector on this isolated farm. Like a soldier, Ellen "stands guard" throughout the night with her brother George (379). She also moves the horse to a spot near George's window, which positions Ellen as a guard for both indoor and outdoor parts of this home (379). Guarding is

particularly important to maintain a sense of safety, to ensure that the Hunters have some type of control over their residency, and to keep the farm from becoming a battleground.

The incident with the Union raiding party, however, demonstrates the tenuous line between home front and battlefield in the South. Ellen's home does not become a combat zone, and she does not have to dodge exploding shells like Sue Chancellor or Carrie Berry, but Lyttle illustrates how war can make the home a dangerous place. Mainly, the soldiers create an environment of fear: one soldier threatens to "burn the old secesh den" if Ellen will not let him inside to search; others tease George; and then they search the bedrooms, causing Ellen's younger sister Bessie to look "terrified almost to death" (390). Ultimately, the raid has harmful consequences when Bessie's fear leads to an illness that results in her death (402). Bessie's death suggests why fighting on the home front and sustaining family structures at home is necessary: the war threatens the peace of domestic spaces. This scene emphasizes how Lyttle depicts the Confederate home front as a war zone with its own set of casualties and risks; however, this home front is not a battle zone, especially since the soldiers do not release gunfire or burn Ellen's house. Furthermore, the family's next interaction with soldiers includes meeting a benevolent Union regiment who find a doctor for Bessie, thus implying that military activity on the home front can be peaceful (398). Ellen does not experience an environment as tranquil as the ones in *Uncle Buddy's Gift Book* or *The Third Reader,* yet like the girls in Uncle Buddy's and Chaudron's stories, she learns that her task is to help create a peaceful atmosphere.

Ellen also suggests that girls are responsible for making the home front as controlled as it can possibly be in frightening circumstances. When Bessie dies after the

Union raid, Ellen realizes that she cannot let fear overcome her, and she remains "unmoved so that she might keep her promise, made to little Bessie long ago, that when she died Ellie would keep 'close by her'" (402). Ellen is "unmoved" by her emotions so she can stay composed as her sister dies. Ellen fights the war through conquering her sorrow so she can remain strong for her family. Her weapon of choice for protecting the home front is emotional stasis, which keeps this space from becoming volatile and chaotic like a combat zone.

As Ellen protects her home during the Union raid, the text illustrates how gender designations are in flux during wartime. George, for instance, is crippled from war injuries, which allows Ellen to assume an important role defending the home. As George explains, "If it was not for this confounded wound, I might be able to do something, but as it is you will have to see after everything" (378). Ellen then "hide[s] everything valuable in the shape of silver and jewelry" (378). Instead of her father or brother engaging in the public or economic marketplace to maintain their wealth, Ellen is the one now responsible for securing valuable items and her family's elite class status. When the Union soldiers arrive, Ellen ensures that she maintains some control over the home because only she knows the location of these valuables. In addition to showcasing female control, Lyttle calls attention to the fact that wounded men do not always have the strength to guard their family from intruders. The Union soldiers try to make George walk, even though he is crippled and cannot leave his bed (390). They disrupt the southern view of protection in which men have the physical abilities to protect women and children. In this scene, the text suggests girls become these types of protectors during wartime. Indeed, when the soldiers enter the bedroom of the younger children, her sister

Bessie is "looking terrified almost to death….Ellen went up to her, and putting her arms around her said: 'Don't be scared, Bessie. I won't let them hurt you'" (391). In shielding her sister from the fearful circumstances, Ellen attempts to maintain as much stability and calm as possible. In the bedroom—the most private place in the home—Ellen's emotional comfort has more value than any efforts of physical strength. She cannot bodily assault the soldiers, but she can make her sister feel safer. In this scene, Lyttle distinguishes between gendered methods of defending the home, but she also suggests the efforts of girls can be just as important than those of boys or men.

While Ellen receives more responsibility than she previously held when George was healthy, Lyttle does not give Ellen unlimited abilities and completely overturn the gender hierarchies of southern homes. After all, Ellen says she will prepare for the raid only if George "tell[s] me what to do" (378). Furthermore, when the Union soldiers arrive, Ellen immediately asks her brother for direction, rather than devising any of her own ideas (378). In effect, she cannot think until a male authority figure thinks for her. As Ellen's behaviors indicate, an unhealthy boy still has more power than a healthy girl. Through Ellen's obedience to George, Lyttle creates a vision of the home front that preserves prewar, male-controlled family structures. Although many real girls saw their male family members leave for war, some traditional family structures still exist in Lyttle's Confederacy, which might be a comfort for readers who are facing wartime changes in their own lives. This representation implies family is an institution strong enough to survive illness and war, especially when girls remember their roles as dutiful daughters and sisters.

Although Ellen's brother orchestrates her role as a protector, Ellen still shows how girls can preserve their homes and families in ways that adults and men cannot, especially during wartime. When Ellen redirects her attention from the hospital to the home, she "was so much occupied in taking care of her mother and the children, that she did not have much time to indulge in gloomy thoughts. It was, perhaps, the very best thing for her, as it enabled her to feel stronger when the time of trial came" (302). Focusing on the home, rather than "gloomy thoughts" of the war and public concerns, is vital because it will strengthen Ellen. Lyttle does not shield Ellen from tragedies, yet Lyttle indicates that working in the home will help Ellen to better endure the war's hardships, such as Union raids and Bessie's death. Ellen learns that a southern girl needs to preserve her family life so the virtuous values that result from a stable, loving family will survive the war. In fact, she is the agent responsible for perpetuating these values. Even though men and boys are perishing on the battlefield, Confederate ideals can endure if girls keep families intact and maintain some sense of peace on the home front.

Guardians of the Confederacy

As Ellen Hunter stands guard during the Union raid, she embodies how southern children's authors envision Confederate girls protecting their nation through emotional efforts and domestic duties, as well as preserving their country's cultural values. The spatial considerations in this type of literature call particular attention to the construction of Confederate girls as protectors of their nation and its citizens. Because the home front stays separate from the battlefield, girls experience relatively stable, peaceful conditions in which they can more feasibly exert power. The emphasis on the work of girls in domestic areas also suggests why those war zones should remain separate. Girls are not

public figures, and girls should not march onto the battlefield, yet they can still contribute to national concerns. The home front, therefore, is as important as the battlefield. Unlike in reality where the line between battlefield and home front often collapsed, these war zones remain distinct in Confederate children's literature in order to present them as both valuable. Collectively, the boys in battle and the girls at home can help win the war: these gendered distinctions form a foundation of southern antebellum society, and a war as tragic as the Civil War will not disable that foundation. According to these southern children's writers, girls will help the Confederates to successfully win the war on *both* fronts.

Not surprisingly, Confederate authors link girlhood and domesticity, but they reorganize domestic spaces so that girls protect their loved ones more effectively than adults. Helen provides a model for good behavior, transforming Alice in ways that the adult doctors and her mother cannot. Ellen Hunter guards her family and their belongings during the Union raid when her parents and older brother are unable to do so. In a slaveholding and plantation society where adult men are expected to have a strong presence in the home, the Civil War disrupts that system and allows children to have a more prominent—and sometimes the most powerful in the case of Ellen Hunter—role in managing these households. As Ellen Hunter's story concludes, Lyttle reveals why domestic service is valuable: Ellen is "saddened by the sufferings" of the war, but "her lot is blessed. She has still a home and kind, loving hearts around her, while others—!" (414). The dash abruptly indicates the harsh reality of war that Lyttle chooses to omit. Unlike Ellen, many girls lost their homes and "loving" families. Many people die, but it is crucial for those girls who still live to have a "blessed" home and "loving" family.

Similarly, the stories in *Uncle Buddy's Gift Book* conclude by emphasizing images of the home and family: Alice lies safely in bed with her mother, and Mary happily walks across the plantation with her grandfather. Summarizing this message in a note situated at the end of "Helen Norcross," Uncle Buddy remarks, "a home without a girl is only half blest" (19). According to these writers, the home is not complete without girls, and by staying tied to the home, girls play a foundational role in linking the Confederacy to past social structures.

Yet in representing a peaceful home front instead of one that becomes a battlefield, these texts create a fantasy of what girls could be and do. In these children's works, the South is not a place where girls hide from artillery shells in cellars or watch their homes burn. Rather, in this society, girls live in a nurturing environment where they obey parents, learn valuable lessons, and prepare to become useful citizens as wives and mothers. *This* South does not radically change domestic standards; therefore, it is an ideal version of the crumbling society child readers are experiencing. Girls therefore have symbolic value as they represent the type of South the Confederates are fighting to preserve, and this fantasy functions as war propaganda. As Uncle Buddy, Chaudron, and Lyttle represent girls preserving Confederate institutions, they construct the South that they hoped Confederate child readers would value. Indeed, *this* South is the one the Confederates are fighting to maintain. This ideal shows southern child readers why it is important for them to keep supporting their nation. Achieving this idealized Confederacy is worth losing a father to Union gunfire or losing belongings to Yankee pillaging. For these reasons, girls need to help sustain the Confederacy, even after it fails, as Lyttle's story advocates.

In their metaphoric conscription through domestic service on the home front, young female characters suggest that girls play an essential role in the survival of their nation. Indeed, children became the hope for sustaining the Confederacy as large percentages of adult men were dying. According to James McPherson, at least 260,000 Confederate soldiers died in the Civil War, and while the number of civilian causalities is difficult to determine, McPherson estimates the number to be around 50,000 (619, 854). These numbers suggest that approximately one in five white southern men of military age died during the war (Faust *This Republic* xi). Confederate children's literature draws attention to these losses. For example, to teach children the word "recent," *The Third Reader* includes the following sentence: "In the recent battle, we lost a great many men" (Chaudron 92). This vocabulary lesson emphasizes the immediate concern of war casualties. Likewise, in its July 6, 1867 issue, *Burke's Weekly* even printed death tolls so children could be aware of these numbers and the "terrible havoc of war" (4). This literature wants children to understand why maintaining the southern cause is valuable enough to fight in a war and become part of that death toll. With so many dead, children were the ones left alive to continue the aims of the Confederacy. Samuel Boykin expresses this message in *The Child's Index*. After explaining why the Confederacy is fighting, he gives his readers several wartime duties, including, "Study with all your might, and learn all you can; for one of these days you will be called upon to rule this Confederacy" (22). Children, more so than adults, can carry antebellum traditions and Confederate ideals into the future.

Perhaps resulting from the death tolls, and anticipating the casualties yet to come, the books examined in this chapter emphasize girls as protectors. This representation

indicates that the future of the Confederacy did not rely solely on adults, which reconfigures adult/child hierarchies and places the child in an equal—or in some cases, more important—position of influence. Adults made the decisions to secede and engage in war, but children can decide what kind of country the Confederacy will be. In short, because of wartime conditions, authors use southern girls to challenge designations of age. These girl characters are not victims who need adults to save them from the trauma and danger of war. Instead, girls save themselves and others from these hardships. Confederate children's literature organizes southern society in a way that privileges the efforts of children over adults. Girls, as opposed to boys, have particular potential to impact this country's future because they can become mothers and raise the next generation of southern children to be ideal Confederate citizens. In fact, Uncle Buddy and Lyttle both use twelve-year-old girls to represent the model Confederate girl. Ellen Hunter and Helen Norcross in Uncle Buddy's "Helen Norcross, or The Two Friends" are not young children, but they are nearing young womanhood, suggesting that southern domestic values are especially important for girls to protect as they prepare to become adults. Thus, in preparation to birth the next generation of the Confederacy, girls must engage in domestic service, preserve the home front, and protect southern traditions. In doing so, girls function as a viable hope for a dying country. Even when this nation's military suffers defeat after the surrender at Appomattox and its political structures start to collapse, girls should continue to fight for their country and ensure that the Confederacy remains alive.

CHAPTER IV

BEYOND THE BIG HOUSE: EXPANDING DOMESTIC SPACE IN POSTBELLUM PLANTATION FICTION

While growing up on Berkeley Plantation near Natchez, Mississippi, Mary Savage Conner wrote in her diary about typical experiences of white, middle- to upper-class girlhood in the nineteenth-century, including playing with her four sisters, sewing, and completing schoolwork. Twelve-year-old Mary also records a proclivity for outdoor activities. In entries addressed to "Miss Journal," she describes walking in the woods almost every day, and she often tends her garden (n. pag.). Such behaviors are calm and nurturing, seeming like typical feminine decorum, but Mary also engages in more boisterous, athletic play. On July 2, 1839, she writes of going to nearby cliffs on the Mississippi river: "How we ran from cliff to cliff & enjoyed ourselves" (n. pag.). Mary's diary also indicates that outdoor play was not only part of white childhood on the plantation. An entry on June 11, 1839 reports, "Anna [Mary's younger sister] is playing out doors with a whole possee of negro children" (n. pag.). Since these activities were considered "play" by a white child like Mary—even though the black children may have viewed them more as work—these examples illustrate how interracial interactions and outdoor spaces are fundamental aspects of plantation girlhood.

These intersections between racial codes and outdoor spaces gives insight into distinct regional depictions of girlhoods in children's postbellum plantation fiction, written from the middle to late nineteenth century. While children's fiction set on and about plantations existed prior to the Civil War, postwar texts offer a particularly romanticized representation of the type of childhood made possible in that setting. Unlike

abolitionist and Confederate literature set on plantations, postbellum plantation fiction accepts the war has ended, promotes slavery as a morally just institution, and memorializes a white, elite version of the past. However, like the abolitionist and Confederate literature examined in this project, postbellum plantation fiction is a white construction of the plantation directed towards white readers. Postbellum plantation fiction features the adventures of boys and girls; however, the books that focus on young female characters illustrate how girls should celebrate plantation life in ways specific to their gender.

Girls are an especially integral part of the plantation system in novels by three children's authors: Martha Finley, Louise Clarke Pyrnelle, and Joel Chandler Harris. Highly popular in the nineteenth century and still in print today, the Elsie Dinsmore series (1867-1905) by Martha Finley spans 28 books about a pious girl and her descendants on a Virginia plantation. Although the southern features of this series have received less critical attention than its other qualities, Finley's books offer insight into a girl's role in plantation management and plantation childrearing methods.[35] In particular, I will focus on the fourth and fifth books, *Elsie's Womanhood* (1875) and *Elsie's Motherhood* (1876) because they depict plantation girlhood during crucial moments in the South's history: the end of the antebellum era, the Civil War, and the beginning of Reconstruction. These two books show the series' protagonist Elsie experiencing a

[35] Most critics, including Pam Hardman, Helena Michie, Jackie Stallcup, and Emily Hamilton-Honey, examine Elsie's relationship with her father, Elsie's Christian faith, or Elsie as the "idealized, romantic Victorian child," as Carolyn Carpan describes her (1). Two exceptions to this critical trend are Marla Harris, who discusses Finley's critique of the Ku Klux Klan, and Donnarae MacCann, who argues that Finley's books promote "the myth of Black inferiority" through Elsie's interactions with her slaves (116). While MacCann addresses black characters of all ages, I focus more on the impact and expression of this myth on girls, black and white.

courtship, getting married, having children, and battling the Ku Klux Klan, all while cultivating Christian beliefs in her family, friends, and slaves.

Focused less on evangelical purposes than the Elsie Dinsmore books but depicting similar race relations, Louise Clarke Pyrnelle's *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot, or Plantation Child-Life* (1882) depicts three white girls and their three slaves on a Mississippi plantation. The girls listen to folktales from adult slaves, attempt to avoid mischief, and learn how to behave properly according to their positions as slave or slaveholder. The only one of Pyrnelle's two books published in her lifetime, *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot* was popular at the time of its publication and has been reprinted eight times in the twentieth century (Hoole and Hoole 32). This publication history suggests a continuing interest in Pyrnelle's representation of plantation childhood, yet scholarship on *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot* is more limited.[36] This book, though, provides an understanding of how the plantation shapes unique regional expectations for girls. Finally, the six-book series by Joel Chandler Harris—beginning with *Little Mr. Thimblefinger and His Queer Company: What the Children Saw and Heard There* (1894) and concluding with *Wally Wanderoon and His Story-telling Machine* (1903)—features two girls and a boy on their Georgia plantation. The books mostly focus on folk stories the children hear from magical beings and adult slaves as they play throughout their plantation and neighboring ones. This series is not as well known as Harris' popular Uncle Remus books; however, its focus on

[36] Few scholarly examinations exist on *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot,* and these works focus solely on the book's racial aspects. MacCann and Paula Connolly discuss Pyrnelle's construction of racial stereotypes, while Joyce E. Kelley asserts that the book "challenge[s] the rigidity of the slave system" (142). Kristina DuRocher also includes *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot* in her analysis of cultural items that socialized white southern children into enforcing segregation. My argument expands on these critics by examining the relationship between race and gender in Pyrnelle's novel.

a plantation owner's daughter, Sweetest Susan, and a child mammy, Drusilla, indicates that Harris was concerned with representing the experience of plantation girlhood.[37]

Finley, Pyrnelle, and Harris construct two strains of plantation girlhood through the places young female characters go and the protocols they follow there—particularly in outside locations. To examine the role of place in shaping these girlhoods, I consider these books in relation to historical information concerning the spatial arrangement of outdoor areas on plantations, demonstrating how these authors represent the plantation as a site with domestic space extending beyond the Big House and into the grounds. Because of this expanded domestic area, fictional southern girls have distinct regional traits. Young female characters are shaped by their jobs in the plantation's labor system and by their connection to the natural landscape. I argue that white and black southern girls protect the plantation—and the antebellum past—through maintaining racial hierarchies and promoting an agrarian lifestyle. More specifically, they protect racial views that elevate whiteness above blackness and agrarian values that favor outdoor activity. Through this depiction, Finley, Pyrnelle, and Harris reconfigure two significant features of girlhood in nineteenth-century children's literature: compassionate friendship and an association between girls and the indoors. Ultimately, this reconceptualization of girlhood suggests that southern girls can keep white supremacist lifestyles from becoming a "lost cause" when they feminize outdoor plantation spaces.

Like most postbellum plantation fiction for adults, these books by Finley, Pyrnelle, and Harris showcase the plantation to develop the myth of the Lost Cause.

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[37] Scholarship on the *Little Mr. Thimblefinger* series is also more limited. MacCann provides the most extensive discussion, including the books alongside the Elsie Dinsmore series and *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot* in her survey of nineteenth-century children's works that present white supremacist depictions of African American characters.

During Reconstruction, as southerners imagined what their future held and how they would remember their past, the Lost Cause emerged as a way for white southerners to cope with the defeat of the Civil War. As scholars such as Alan Nolan and Charles Reagan Wilson have shown, this myth represents the plantation as a place where masters and slaves share affectionate bonds and where slavery is a just, necessary, and preferable way of life. Especially for authors who grew up on plantations and witnessed the changes brought by the Civil War, such as Pyrnelle in Alabama and Harris in Georgia, writing about this myth became a way to express nostalgia for their youth. Although plantation fiction as a literary genre started in the antebellum period and continued into the twentieth century,[38] postwar authors such as Thomas Nelson Page and Thomas Dixon represented the myth by constructing an exceptionally idealized portrait of plantation life. As Francis Pendleton Gaines notes, "The scale of life was steadily enlarged….Estates swelled in size and mansions grew proportionately great. Gentlemen were perfected in courtly grace, gay girls in loveliness, slaves in immeasurable devotion" (64). In addition, postbellum writers often used black instead of white characters, such as Joel Chandler Harris' Uncle Remus, to voice a defense of slavery. Through romanticizing these characters and this environment, postbellum plantation fiction crafted "a fantasy of white, male power," as Caroline Gebhard asserts (136). In these fictional worlds, white masters reigned over slaves, land, and their families to maintain antebellum race relations. This lifestyle is what characters in postwar plantation novels protect; the cause is already lost in reality, and southern writers want to prevent it from passing out of memory altogether.

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[38] Most critics credit *Swallow Barn* (1832) by John Pendleton Kennedy as initiating the genre of plantation fiction. In the twentieth century, works such as *Gone with the Wind* (1936) by Margaret Mitchell continued the plantation myth.

In children's literature, however, writers diverge from this male-centric vision of the plantation and incorporate children into the project of the Lost Cause. Finley, Pyrnelle, and Harris, for instance, use common experiences of (white) childhood, such as playing and making friends, to romanticize southern lifestyles and idealize the plantation as a safe, enjoyable environment, as critics such as Paula Connolly and Donnarae MacCann have observed (Connolly 103; MacCann 84-85). One of the ways authors shape this white supremacist image of the plantation is through making "slavery seem innocent," as Robin Bernstein argues. Bernstein notes that Harris, in particular, "hitched nostalgia for plantation slavery to nostalgia for childhood," thus making both childhood and slavery appear more desirable (142). Like Harris, Finley and Pyrnelle depict black and white child characters happily playing on the plantation, which suggests that the plantation setting enables a childhood filled with innocent fun between masters and slaves, thus using childhood and children's literature as vehicles for racism.

Expanding on these critics, I focus on the distinct ways girls contribute to the plantation myth. In particular, I assert that Finley, Pyrnelle, and Harris use girl characters to make "slavery seem innocent" in especially gendered ways (Bernstein 142). These characters demonstrate how girls form master/slave bonds differently from adults and boys. For example, in *Little Mr. Thimblefinger and His Queer Country,* Sweetest Susan and her slave Drusilla play together more often than Drusilla plays with Susan's brother Buster John. As the narrator explains, "Sometimes she and Drusilla would play with the Dolls out in the yard, and sometimes Buster John would join them when he had nothing better to do" (7). Harris indicates that girls and boys do not always use the same pursuits to enjoy plantation life. Buster John enjoys other "better" tasks that are not open to the

girls, while the girls engage in particularly feminine play, with their dolls. With this feminine play, Harris creates an appearance of girl friendship. In doing so, he promotes the plantation as a space that allows young slave mistresses *and* slave girls to share similar, fun-filled experiences. In other words, same gender bonds perpetuate the idealistic Lost Cause: companionship makes mistress/slave relations appear more innocent and less demeaning to slaves. When emphasizing the ways girls experience the plantation, Harris does not imagine the plantation as a place of labor or economic production; rather, it is a site of domesticity where girls can develop socially and enjoy themselves.

Indoor and Outdoor Domestic Spaces

The scene of Drusilla and Sweetest Susan playing dolls also exemplifies how domestic spatial boundaries are an important factor in the construction of southern girlhoods in postbellum plantation fiction. Playing with dolls is a fairly typical activity for girls in the late nineteenth century; however, the fact that they play "out in the yard" indicates that Harris relocates feminine activities beyond the physical walls of the home (*Little* 7). In doing so, Harris expresses how the domestic space of a plantation differed from other types of homes. As Chapter II discusses, plantations were considered a household, rather than a home, because a variety of people lived there and a variety of buildings were enclosed within its borders. According to historians such as Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, John Vlach, and Charles S. Aiken, most plantations contained the Big House where the white master's family lived; a yard with outbuildings for food production such as the kitchen; additional outbuildings associated with the crops such as a cotton gin or barn; and grounds with slave quarters, gardens, orchards, and fields.

Typically, southerners arranged these sites in what Aiken calls "a nucleated settlement complex," with the Big House functioning as the locus surrounded by everything else (7). This nucleated organization reinforced the racial dynamics of the plantation, centralizing the white masters and relegating the slaves to more peripheral areas. Spatial arrangements on plantations, as Clifton Ellis and Dell Upton have found, created hierarchies that strengthened the power of the slaveholders. The adult, white male planter was generally most in control, and girls learned about how much (or how little) authority they were permitted through movement into and around certain sites, as well as the protocols for behavior in those places.

While the grounds and outbuildings surrounding the Big House were more marginal, they were still considered domestic space because the plantation's inhabitants lived and worked there. In all of these areas, girls remain inside the household since they stay inside the plantation's property lines. In fact, Annie Burton's slave narrative describes her girlhood experiences playing with her master's children on their plantation, "not knowing or caring what things were going on in the great world outside our little realm" (3). Burton demonstrates how a plantation as a whole was considered an insulated "realm" that separated children from a broader, more unknown "world." Postbellum children's authors represent this large area, using the word "home" to refer to the entire plantation instead of only the main house. In *Elsie's Motherhood*, when describing postwar renovations, the narrator explains, "The old *home* of the Dinsmores, though shorn of the glory of its grand old trees, was again a beautiful place: the new house was in every respect a finer one than its predecessor…; lawns, gardens, and fields had become neat and trim as in the days before the war, and a double row of young, thrifty trees

bordered the avenue" (8, emphasis mine). Here, the list identifies the components of a plantation home: house, lawns, gardens, fields, trees, and avenue. Home extends beyond the Big House to reach the property lines of the plantation. Because all of these areas combine to form the home, girls stay enclosed in a domestic setting of security whenever they roam through the different locations on the plantation. Here, home includes both inside and outside locations, yet the gardens, fields, and avenue are not wild places. Instead, the Dinsmores have made these areas "neat and trim." On this plantation, the cultivated landscape creates a safe, ordered place for girls to continue experiencing the benefits of an expanded domestic arena after the Civil War.

While growing up in a home that encompassed so many outdoor areas, the daughters of actual plantation owners often spent time outside. Vlach has found that typical plantations in the second quarter of the nineteenth century contained four to five hundred acres, though some contained a thousand or more acres (9). Many plantations sat adjacent to rivers as to easily ship crops, and large amounts of woods often lay beyond the fields (Prunty 464). White girls had access to many of these areas. In fact, historian Anya Jabour has found that active outdoor play was a common feature of antebellum girlhood on plantations. These girls frequently played rowdy games, rode horses, took walks in the woods, played in nearby streams, and climbed trees. As girls entered young womanhood in their teenage years, clothing such as corsets and hoopskirts restricted their movement and thus their ability to engage in these behaviors outside, but childhood provided elite, white girls with the freedom to enjoy more athletic pursuits in a range of locations (*Scarlett's Sisters* 18-19). One daughter of a planter, eleven-year-old Anna Rosalie Quitman, kept a diary in which she frequently writes about playing in her "moss

garden," visiting the green house, and going fishing on her estate in Natchez, Mississippi. On February 1, 1855, Anna mentions, "we went out into the woods [and] I got a buttercup up by its roots [and] its roots were like two legs afterwards we went into the front yard where we set down on the root of an old oak tree" (n. pag.). Anna's account indicates that elite, white girls entered a variety of outdoor sites, both cultivated—such as the garden—and more wild—such as the woods. Girls also ventured into both marginal areas of the property—such as the woods and creeks—and areas closer to the Big House—such as the yard. Furthermore, Anna's diary suggests that these locations are close enough that she can easily travel between them within an afternoon, all while not straying too far from the Big House.

While Anna's estate was located on a different property from her family's fields, which were in different counties near Natchez, many girls grew up on plantations where the sites of crop production were closer to the Big House. With the nuclear structure of plantations, the outbuildings and slave quarters typically sat between the fields and the Big House, but the fields were often within easy walking distance of the Big House. For example, according to a map of Hopeton Plantation in Georgia, the Big House was about 1,000 feet from the nearest field (Prunty 464). Yet historical accounts suggest girls—both slaveholding and younger slave girls—were not supposed to go to places designated for crop production, including fields, mills, barns that stored crops, or gin houses. For example, in an account collected by the Federal Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration in the 1930s, former slave Lina Hunter recalls prescribed areas for black children on her Georgia plantation: "Chillun never had to wuk on our plantation 'til dey was big enough to go to de fields, and dat was when dey was around 12 to 14 years old.

Dey jus' played 'round de yards and down by de wash-place dat was a little ways off from de big house on a branch dat run from de big spring" (Work Projects Administration 259). Likewise, "Master had a big old ginhouse on de plantation about two miles from de big house, but I never seed in it, 'cause det didn't 'low 'omens and chilluns 'round it" (261). As with Anna's diary, Lina's account demonstrates the prominence of outdoor areas, such as the yard and creeks, in the lives of southern girls. Both slave and slaveholding girls used these spaces for play, but many slave girls had less freedom in choosing where to go. Indeed, playing with white children outside was often part of a slave girl's job. The plantation was a household with both economic and domestic labor; therefore, girls of both races could never completely escape places of work. Yet when working as either slaves or slaveholders, girls stayed in more domestic areas. These spatial designations illustrate how plantation households encouraged shared experiences between white and black southern girls, but those experiences were never entirely equal. After all, slave girls would grow up to become field workers, while slaveholding girls would not. In all areas of the plantation, thus, girls could not escape their prescribed roles in the slave system.

Children's plantation novels depict this race-based divide. In *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot*, each of the three white girls has her own slave—Riar, Chris, and Dilsey—who are girls roughly their same age or a few years older than the title characters. As the narrator explains, Riar, Chris, and Dilsey "played with [Diddie, Dumps, and Tot] and were in training to be their maids" (14). Likewise, in the series beginning with *Little Mr. Thimblefinger*, Harris labels twelve-year-old Drusilla a "nurse" and a "playmate" for two white siblings who are a few years younger than she, Sweetest Susan and Buster John (5,

6). In both of these descriptions, the language correlates work and play as interrelated experiences for slave girls. In other words, work is play and vice versa. This correlation suggests that the work of slave girls is fun, which advances the Lost Cause ideal of the plantation as an enjoyable place to grow up. Through this intergenerational bond, plantation girls are made to seem separate but equal, becoming conditioned and conditioning each other into this system from the time they are infants.

Preserving Southern Racial Codes

One of the primary ways that Finley, Pyrnelle, and Harris use girl characters as protectors of plantation culture is through their jobs as young slaves and slave mistresses. These fictional girls not only live in a setting defined by the slave system but also actively contribute to that institution. The duties and expectations of a young mistress or a young slave shape these characters, and they, in turn, shape life on the plantation. These roles also impact where fictional girls go and how they behave in certain spaces. Though the responsibilities of plantation girls differ based on their skin color, children's writers suggest they have the same goal: their work enables them to preserve racial codes that privilege whiteness over blackness. In doing so, authors positions girls—instead of adults or boys—as the most valuable caretakers of the antebellum plantation system.

Elsie Dinsmore, in particular, sustains the plantation through her duties as a girl slaveholder. In *Elsie's Womanhood*, which follows Elsie's transition from the end of her girlhood in her late teen years to the birth of her children, the story is set before the Civil War. Elsie inherits her deceased mother's plantation Viamede in Louisiana, and she—not her father—becomes the sole owner of the property, including "between two and three hundred negroes" (Finley 18). In the antebellum period, most plantations owned between

20 and 30 slaves, so a place like Viamede was rare and belonged to the most elite and powerful (Vlach 9). The concept of a girl inheriting this type of plantation suggests that girls can subvert gender and age designations to ascend to the highest position in southern society. Claiming responsibility for these slaves and ownership of Viamede is a specific task for Elsie during her girlhood in that it is the last duty she completes before she marries. Although engaged to Edward Travilla at this point, Elsie is still called a girl by the narrator and multiple characters, implying that she remains a girl until she marries (21, 27). Her status as a girl implies that young, unmarried female characters can assume the responsibilities of running and owning a plantation.

This matrilineal inheritance classifies the plantation as a system and place that is not controlled entirely by white men or adults. While critics debate Elsie's authority in relation to other characters in the series, her participation in plantation management allows her to acquire control and influence, most notably over the male overseer at Viamede and her own father.[39] Although Elsie's father Horace previously exerts considerable authority over her to the point of emotional abuse in the series' first two books *Elsie Dinsmore* (1867) and *Elsie's Holiday at Roselands* (1868), Elsie's new position as plantation owner gives her more financial power than Horace, whose holdings are worth "hardly a third" of Elsie's (*Womanhood* 19). Horace even encourages his daughter to manage her slaves more closely, and he arranges for them to travel to

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[39] Pam Hardman, for instance, discusses how Elsie's father Horace exercises restrictive childrearing methods on Elsie, while Helena Michie sees Elsie and Horace involved in more of a power struggle. In contrast, Jackie Stallcup argues that Elsie wields the "power of economics" in using her money to enact Christian charity and teach her children those principles (301). Elsie's approach to plantation management also relies on using her wealth to help the black workers, such as though establishing a school for the newly freed slaves in *Elsie's Motherhood.*

Viamede so Elsie can begin this job. While there, Elsie stops the overseer from whipping a slave woman. She "called out in a voice of authority and indignation, 'Stop! Not another blow!'" (50). Elsie's status as owner of Viamede gives her the verbal power to dictate the treatment of slaves, and the overseer does not challenge her orders. Although she tells her father she feels "ready to submit to your authority," Horace relinquishes that dominant role (60). He mainly observes while Elsie chastises the overseer and forbids him to use whipping as a form of punishment (59-60). With her father's aid and the deference of the overseer, Elsie transforms her plantation into a female-oriented space. Finley suggests that, when in the control of girls, the plantation can operate with a compassionate labor system that protects slaves from physical harm.

Though challenging the male-controlled aspects of most antebellum plantations, Finley also represents the idea that girls should remain in more domestic areas of plantations, rather than in places of crop production. *Elsie's Womanhood* does not describe the fields, and there is only one brief reference to a "sugar-house" that processes the sugar cane grown on Viamede (48). Instead, Finley focuses on the actions that occur in "the grand old mansion with spacious rooms," a description that establishes the Big House as large in size and power (48). As the nucleus around which this plantation and its inhabitants revolve, the Big House is the place where Elsie implements her management of the slaves. For instance, she convinces her father that they should provide winter clothing for the slaves, and she wants to sew the clothes herself (67). As her father reminds her, though, Elsie must follow slaveholding protocol. She should not complete menial labor or chores; instead, Elsie should concern herself with the "head work" and "have the servants do all the rest" (*Womanhood* 67). By supervising the sewing, Elsie still

remains in the Big House, but she also becomes more of a protector and preserver of plantation lifestyles. Not only does she maintain the hierarchy that places white individuals in charge, but she also protects the welfare of the slaves by providing winter clothing. Both of these efforts enable the slaves to work more comfortably, happily, and efficiently, thus illustrating how protection from white girls creates a stronger illusion of the plantation as a beneficial place than masculine protection does.

Elsie's concern for the better material and emotional conditions of the slaves depicts the Big House as the central location in which white girls practice their authority over slaves, so they can then extend that control throughout the rest of the plantation. Elsie exerts this authority when she visits Viamede's slave quarters. To attend to the health of the slaves, she "entered one neatly whitewashed cabin after another" (*Womanhood* 65). Because there are many cabins, Finley represents this plantation as a household with a variety of homes, yet Elsie's protocol of white superiority dictates how all of these homes operate. The description of Elsie entering the cabins suggests Elsie is a benevolent mistress who provides proper living conditions, as well as time for the slaves to make their cabins "neat." Though appearing benevolent, Elsie's actions classify the quarters as a peripheral site with marginalized inhabitants. For instance, she speaks "soothingly" to them, as if her words could cure their ailments (*Womanhood* 66). Her presence there establishes her power over them, implying that slaves must adhere to this hierarchy in their own homes. As a healer, Elsie exerts a feminine form of slave management, and she nurtures her slaves like a mother would care for a sick child. In fact, Elsie's status as a girl seems to amplify the benevolence of the system, making it appear desirable because a gentle girl mistress offers this familial care to her slaves. Her

actions sustain the vitality of this institution by creating healthier workers who have more energy to contribute to working in the fields or the house. Elsie's emotional approach to slave management reconfigures male authority, as well as suggests the plantation is more than a place of work, yet it still follows a white supremacist protocol. Like the abolitionist girls, Elsie elevates herself as a savior, while the black characters need saving, healing, and protection.

Through placing Elsie in both master and slave homes, Finley underscores how girls manage slaves in particularly feminine ways. Elsie permanently resides in Virginia, but she travels to Viamede in Louisiana so she can "see how my poor people are faring" (20). Elsie's comment expresses that her purpose is to ameliorate the conditions of the slaves through forming an emotional closeness to them. By calling them her "people" instead of her "slaves," Elsie connotes a more intimate relationship instead of an economic affiliation. These "people" are more than her workers; they are like family members whom she must shield from harm. With this perspective, Elsie assumes the paternalistic role of the male planter who interacts with his slaves like a father with his children. Yet she is more of a maternal protector because she does not protect through physical force, a trait more frequently associated with southern white men, such as the overseer who whips the girl Elsie saves. Indeed, in Thomas Nelson Page's *Two Little Confederates*, an older slave teaches the two boys to make whips, thus preparing them for a future as masters who will beat their slaves (4). Elsie, on the other hand, protects her slaves by showing affection. The text uses the word "poor" in an attempt to demonstrate her compassion for the slaves, but this word choice also evidences condescension and the class difference between Elsie and her slaves. Elsie's affectionate treatment ultimately

guards what many white southerners viewed as the goal of the plantation: to keep slaves working happily in their submissive positions.

Though using Elsie to defend slavery, Finley rarely mentions slave girls, omitting what Harris and Pyrnelle suggest is a major feature of plantation girlhood. Harris' and Pyrnelle's focus on the relationship between white and black girls on the plantation more closely aligns with historical accounts from the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Before and after the Civil War, raising black and white children together was a fundamental part of plantation life. Even once slaveholding plantations gave way to sharecropping and tenant farming, this arrangement taught children to embrace white-centric perceptions of blackness and whiteness. In her study of how southern children learned and enacted race prior to the Civil Rights movement, Jennifer Ritterhouse explains, "Black and white children came to understand themselves in relation to one another, both through their interactions and by assimilating the complicated lessons of their parents and other adults….[R]acial self-definition seems to have depended most on defining or being defined by racial 'others'" (17). In this society, what it meant to be a black or white southern girl was contingent on definitions of girlhood of the opposite race. This codependent bond appears in both Pyrnelle's and Harris' books, representing plantation girlhood as an experience that cannot fully exist without both black and white girls. One is either enslaved or a slaveholder, and both of these identities need the other one to function properly. While Elsie Dinsmore relies on older slaves, such as her mammy, Harris' and Pyrnelle's focus on this intergenerational mistress/slave connection suggests that the plantation is not only a feminine space but a girlish one.

Drusilla and Sweetest Susan in Harris' books is one of the clearest examples of authors defining black and white girls in opposition to each other. Primarily, this series centers around the girls and Susan's brother Buster John listening to stories from magical beings and slaves. As they play on the plantation, Drusilla's role as a nurse depends upon Susan's status as an elite, white girl who requires a caretaker. Repeatedly, Drusilla does not want to participate in the white children's adventures, and she fears the places where Sweetest Susan and Buster John want to go, from *Little Mr. Thimblefinger's Queer Country* to the home of another magical creature, Wally Wanderoon, in the series' final book, *Wally Wanderoon and His Story-telling Machine*. As the narrator explains, "Drusilla was perhaps more anxious to go than any of the others" (*Wally Wanderoon* 23). Drusilla's opposition could indicate that Harris gives a black girl some agency to disagree with her masters, and critics have argued that Harris differs from other plantation novelists in challenging white supremacist plantation structures.[40] However, the white children typically ignore or criticize Drusilla's opinions, or she changes her mind to match the white children's decisions. When Drusilla ultimately joins Sweetest Susan and Buster John, she does so in a way that maintains her servant's role: she tells them, "Ef I go…'twon't be kaze I wanter! It'll be bekaze I wanter take keer er you-all" (*Wally Wanderoon* 23). This comment expresses how Drusilla's desire for a connection to others takes precedence over a desire that only concerns herself. She does not "wanter" go, but

[40] Critics make this assertion about Harris' Uncle Remus books, specifically focusing on the subversive potential in the stories told by Uncle Remus to the boy. Lucinda MacKethan asserts that Harris uses these stories to give black characters some humanity (MacKethan 70). Kristina DuRocher sees the Uncle Remus books as "counternarratives" to the plantation novel because the trickster figure manipulates those in power (54). Likewise, Paula Connolly contends that these stories "interrogate the presumed superiority of the master class" (112).

since she also wants to "take keer" of the children, she prioritizes the impulse that gives her a place within the plantation network.

Moreover, Drusilla's desire to care for the children relies upon the notion that the white children need her care. For instance, when first asked to follow Mr. Thimblefinger to his country, Drusilla is immediately concerned about Susan's safety. She fears that they will all drown in the process of passing through a spring to reach the magical land. Drusilla "touched Sweetest Susan on the arm. 'Honey,' said she, 'don't let dat creetur pull you in de spring'" (*Little Mr. Thimblefinger* 26). Drusilla offers this warning to Sweetest Susan, and notably not to Susan's brother, who can apparently defend himself against drowning. This moment implies that white girls require more care than white boys, and Drusilla must protect her mistress in order to be a proper nurse. Likewise, Sweetest Susan must accept that protection in order to remain a proper mistress and let Drusilla fulfill her prescribed role as servant. When Sweetest Susan enters the spring, she calls, "Come on, Drusilla! You've got to come. Mama said you must go wherever we went" [sic] (29). Sweetest Susan belongs to the master class, so she must have her slave beside her to maintain that status, even in an unfamiliar land. Through the girls' relationship, therefore, Harris constructs whiteness as receiving servitude and blackness as offering it, both of which are codependent on each other. As a result, the girls' movements are tied to one another.

The expectation that Drusilla accompany Sweetest Susan throughout this household positions both girls as preservers of the plantation's white supremacist values; however, it also characterizes slave girls as protectors of their mistresses' welfare. In this representation of a child mammy, Harris shows a fairly common duty for slave girls on

antebellum plantations. Actual slave girls were typically unprotected and susceptible to emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, but the slave system also cast black girls as protectors through their roles as nurses to white children, as one image entitled *Magby Peterson and his Nanny* demonstrates (Figure 4).[41] In this tintype from 1868, an unnamed black girl leans into two-year-old Magby and appears to physically protect this toddler from falling off the chair. By holding Magby's hand, she appears to offer emotional care, as if she were comforting him, keeping him still while the photograph is being taken, or expressing affection for him. Though a child, she is strong enough to carry Magby and towers over him in terms of size, which enables her to control him when he cries or acts unruly. In other words, she can regulate his movement.

Figure 4. Magby Peterson and his nanny. Courtesy of *Florida Memory*, State Archives of Florida, Web.

This girl demonstrates how child nurses express traits of the mammy figure, which was popular in nineteenth- and twentieth-century southern literature and culture,

[41] For more about these abuses, see *Stolen Childhood* by Wilma King. King argues these abuses are one of many reasons why slaves did not experience a distinct stage of childhood (xxii).

including plantation novels. As Kimberly Wallace-Sanders argues, it is important to view the mammy as a maternal figure, often impacting white children more than those children's own mothers (7-8). Considering a girl within this pattern of the mammy figure gives insight into how she protects white southern culture through her maternal duties. By raising white children, a girl mammy teaches them about life on the plantation; however, she also socializes the white child into the beliefs of a racist system that keeps her subservient. Additionally, the job creates the illusion that a black girl has some authority and control in a system of limited opportunities. According to these children's writers, though, what differs between a girl mammy and an adult mammy is that a girl spends significantly more time with the white children and thus has a stronger influence, especially by constantly ensuring the white children follow slaveholding protocols.

Ultimately, as Harris emphasizes how white and black girls living on plantations are bound to each other by their race and their work on the plantation, the *Little Mr. Thimblefinger* series differs from the way that children's books of this era represent female fellowship. Girls who spend as much time together as Sweetest Susan and Drusilla are typically friends connected by emotional bonds, such as the March sisters in *Little Women* (1868). As Maria Nikolajeva explains, "Friendship between boys often means having adventures together (*Tom Sawyer)*, while friendship between girls implies feelings, sharing secrets, and so on (*Anne of Green Gables*)" (82). Drusilla and Sweetest Susan share adventures but not any deeper emotional connection, unlike the feelings expressed between Elsie Dinsmore and her slaves. Indeed, when Drusilla "touched Sweetest Susan on the arm" to keep her from entering the spring, Susan ignores this attempt at affection and does not respond (*Little Mr. Thimblefinger* 26). Susan's later

order for Drusilla to follow her only results from an obligation to her mother, and her declarative statements sound more like a threat than an invitation. *Sweetest* Susan does not have to treat her slave sweetly, as a friend might. Susan's response suggests that girl mistresses and slaves can play together, but they cannot be friends in the sense of a compassionate, mutually supportive bond, which would establish a level of equality. Though less emotional than Elsie Dinsmore, these girls also suggest that race is the basis for relationships girls develop.

Like Drusilla and Sweetest Susan, *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot* depicts a similar relationship with the three white sisters and their three slaves, Dilsey, Chris, and Riar. Pyrnelle particularly emphasizes how spatial barriers and arrangements strengthen this codependent bond. The girls play at various sites throughout their plantation, and, during one scene, the girls go to a lumber pile near the gin-house, which is located "some distance from the house" near a field (50). In fact, "a narrow strip of woods lay between the field and the house, so the gin-house was completely hidden" (50). By emphasizing the view of the gin-house from the Big House—the direction in which it is "hidden"—this description expresses how this plantation adheres to a nuclear structure that prioritizes the master's residency. Indeed, the woods form a wall in which to separate domestic areas from places of crop production, thus keeping the privileged inhabitants of the Big House from having to see the arduous slave labor in the fields. Yet when the girls cross this wall and go to the gin-house, the book suggests girls can challenge these spatial barriers. The girls domesticate this space by pretending the lumber pile behind the gin-house is a hotel. They even bring dolls, which transforms the gin-house into a place where girls of both races engage in gender-specific play and practice feminine traits such

as maternal nurturing (52). Historical sources indicate many real girls growing up on plantations rarely entered buildings of crop production, and former slave Lina Hunter notes that her master "didn't 'low 'omens and chilluns 'round" the gin house (261). However, Pyrnelle grants her characters entry into the gin-house to feminize a masculine site, which emphasizes how all areas of the plantation should be sites for economic labor and domesticity.

In addition, Pyrnelle's characters domesticate the gin-house to bring the rules of the Big House to this marginal area. During their game, for instance, they maintain white dominance: Diddie owns the hotel; Dumps and Tot are the guests; and Dilsey, Chris, and Riar are the hotel's servants (53). In this context of play, the girls suggest that being owners and servants is fun. In the game, the girls enjoy giving and receiving orders, which advances the Lost Cause agenda Pyrnelle establishes in the novel's preface. This book intends "to tell of the pleasant and happy relations that existed between master and slave" (vi). As the narrator remarks of their time at the gin-house, they spent "the time laughing and chatting as gayly as could be" (57). Play, therefore, enables plantation girls to protect white supremacist hierarchies by making master/slave jobs appear desirable. This site of crop production now seems like a place of fun instead of one solely for work.

As playmates with shared experiences, these girls also indicate that the line between master and slave can appear to weaken at times, especially when the girls do not adhere to their prescribed duties inside imaginative games. Halfway through the hotel game, Dumps pretends to be a cook, defying Diddie, who declares, "the niggers ought to be the cooks" (56). In such moments of play, Joyce E. Kelley argues that the children "mimic, test, rewrite, and even challenge the rigidity of the slave system" (142). Initially,

these instances may seem to challenge master/slave and white/black hierarchies, but ultimately, they preserve the racial codes of the plantation system. These potentially subversive moments result from the girls making mistakes when acclimating to their roles as young mistresses and slaves. When Dumps crosses the master/servant boundary to pretend she is a cook, she brings chaos into the game. Because Dumps vacates the hotel guest role, the girls use their pet goat, Ole Billy, as a guest; however, Ole Billy turns wild, starting to butt and chase the girls. The incident becomes dangerous when the goat knocks Diddie against the lumber, and she cuts her head (62). When Dumps abandons her class and racial status, Diddie becomes injured, and the girls are trapped on top of the lumber pile, unable to leave without the goat attacking them (64). Dumps' mistake expresses a message that everyone on a plantation needs to stay in their prescribed roles, including a goat that should be treated as an animal instead of a human playmate. As this scene illustrates, elevating whiteness above blackness is so important to the plantation system that children must preserve it in the fictional settings of games. Like Drusilla and Sweetest Susan, these playmates are not friends who inhabit similar positions; rather, companionship between girls on the plantation means reinforcing the hierarchy of mistress and slave. If that line dissolves, then danger results.

Dumps, however, is not the only girl to make a mistake. Pyrnelle also uses the goat attack to show how black girls need to learn a slave's proper duty, which entails protecting their white mistresses from harm. While all girls are cornered on the lumber pile, Dumps orders her personal slave Chris to "[g]et down this minute, an' drive 'im [the goat] off" (63). This command attempts to reinstate a plantation structure where slaves complete the difficult labor while masters observe and profit from the slaves' efforts. Yet

Chris refuses to leave the lumber pile. Then, Riar disobeys Diddie's order to drive off the goat because "I gwine ter stay up hyear long o' Miss Tot, like Mammy tell me. I 'longs to her" (64). Since Tot is Riar's charge, Riar decides to remain on the lumber pile where she can watch over her, yet this decision is also a mistake. In disobeying Diddie, Riar keeps all of the white girls in danger, which suggests that slave girls must protect the collective group instead of the individual, as long as it is a group of white girls. Pyrnelle emphasizes the fault in Chris' and Riar's behaviors when Mammy finally rescues the girls and beats each of the slave girls as punishment for allowing the situation to become so dangerous. As Mammy comments, "I won'er what you kinky-head niggers is fur, ef yer can't keep de chil'en in de yard," (65). Mammy includes all three of the slave girls in her reprimand because they fail in their duty to protect their mistresses. They refuse to sacrifice their own safety, and this attempt to defy their white mistresses undermines the racial codes necessary for plantation structures to exist. Pyrnelle thus uses Diddie's, Chris', and Riar's mistakes to portray childhood as a time for learning the parameters of a mistress' duties and a slave's duties. Because adults create plantation structures and racial codes, girls have not had the time or experience to completely conform to those standards; however, girls must perfect these roles before they become adults. As a place of labor and domesticity, then, this plantation is meant to teach girls to be proper workers according to the rules of the slave system.

In addition, the slave girls also err in disobeying Mammy's order to stay in the yard. Since the yard on plantations surrounded the immediate vicinity of the Big House, Mammy's scolding might seem to suggest girls need to remain closer to the plantation's nucleus and closer to domestic spaces. Nevertheless, the problem concerns the girls

violating racial protocol—not transgressing spatial barriers. After all, the slave girls are the only ones to receive Mammy's punishment, which indicates that the white girls have not erred in going to the gin-house. Mammy then "lectures them on the sin of running away from Mammy" (66). Thus, the "sin" entails leaving Mammy's presence—not leaving the yard and going to a place of crop production. This explanation implies that if Dilsey, Riar, and Chris had adhered to their duties as slaves at the gin-house, then everything would have turned out well. Pyrnelle promotes extending the play area from the yard to the gin-house because this type of household enables white girls to remain safe no matter how far they venture away from their nursery inside the Big House. As a result, the further the girls travel into the marginal areas of the plantation, the more they illustrate the strength of the slave system. Even in more peripheral spaces, these fictional girls learn that maintaining slaveholding protocol, including hierarchical play and companionship, is necessary to protect the plantation's social structure.

Reconfiguring Girlhood for an Agrarian Ideal

The sequence at the gin-house in *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot* also represents a pattern in children's plantation novels featuring girls: young female characters of both races spend a substantial amount of time outside. In fact, in *Little Mr. Thimblefinger*, Drusilla and Sweetest Susan frequently "spent the greater part of the day out of doors, save when the weather was very cold or very wet. They had no desire to stay in the house, except when they were compelled to go to bed, and a great many times they fretted a little because they thought bedtime came too soon" (6). From a practical standpoint, playing outside is probably cooler than staying indoors in this warm climate, especially before the invention of air conditioning, yet this preference for the outdoors also signifies a deep

connection between southern girls and the land in which they live. Drusilla and Sweetest Susan long to spend every possible moment outside where the natural landscape shapes their experiences more than their house. While this emphasis on the outdoors may seem to construct a girlhood with substantial freedom from the home, it instead emphasizes how children's postbellum plantation fiction reconfigures domestic spaces. Because the plantation was considered a large household with both indoor and outdoor sites, girls living in this location technically remain *inside* the boundaries of the home when going to the gin-house, playing in the woods, riding horses, or fishing in nearby creeks. Through these activities, fictional girls demonstrate how the plantation extends domestic space beyond the walls of the house.

The spatial descriptions in Harris' books particularly illustrate how domestic areas spread to the plantation's property lines. In one of the later books in the series, *The Story of Aaron* (1896), the children learn how to talk to animals, and they communicate with a horse named Timoleon. Sweetest Susan and Buster John "gallop" throughout the plantation on Timoleon, abandoning more controlled forms of horsemanship that might seem appropriate for upper class individuals. This ride enables them to travel throughout the entirety of the property: they go on the lane that "led obliquely away from the house," on the public road at the edge of the field, through the slave quarters, over a bridge, and "galloping down the drive" that ends at the Big House (28, 31). These directions emphasize how the Big House inhabits a central location, particularly since the children's ride begins and ends there. Moreover, other sites are located further "down" the hierarchy of importance, but this hierarchy connects these areas as one enclosed network. Because

the plantation contains such a large amount of property, these children venture away from the Big House and still remain inside an area they view as home.

To represent all of these sites as home, Harris emphasizes how the children remain safe throughout the entirety of the ride. They are not crossing a line into dangerous or unknown territory because slaves shield them from any harm they may encounter. As the children ride Timoleon, a stallion known for its rowdy tendencies, "the sight seemed to terrify" their mother, and she becomes so worried that she "covered her face with her hands" (31). Here, Harris demonstrates a potential concern for girls and boys venturing into outdoor areas: when they leave the protected space of the house, they may encounter danger. Exterior locations may be wild, unknown, and unsafe; however, a plantation affords more secure areas that are cultivated and controlled, such as the roads and fields upon which Sweetest Susan and Buster John travel. Additionally, their grandfather encourages the ride because "the youngsters were perfectly safe in Aaron's care" (35). Aaron, the adult slave who accompanies the children, promises Susan, "I will run beside him [the horse] to catch you, if you fall" (26). Throughout the ride, Aaron cuts across fields to keep up with the horse, and he opens gates to enable clear pathways. By specifically offering this care to Susan and not Buster John, Aaron implies that boys are capable of protecting themselves from physical harm in the outdoors and girls are not. Yet Aaron ensures that this potentially rough experience will not endanger Susan in any way; rather, he allows Susan to have fun enjoying the entire property. This dynamic underscores that racial hierarchies are necessary to extend domestic space throughout the plantation. Furthermore, the focus on Aaron caring for Susan situates girls—not boys—as the ones who most maintain these racial codes when playing outside.

Harris extends domestic space particularly far, and his books contain a plantation with a fantasy land inside its borders. In the first two books, *Little Mr. Thimblefinger's Queer Country* and *Mr. Rabbit at Home* (1895), the girls and Buster John meet a man named Mr. Thimblefinger who is four inches tall, and they all travel to Mr. Thimblefinger's "queer country"—a place accessed through the spring on the plantation. By calling this place a "country," Harris implies that the children travel to a foreign and distant place, especially since travelling from America to another country was not an easy or quick feat in the nineteenth century. Buster John feels excited to have this "adventure," and this term indicates that adventures are open to boys and girls, as well as masters and slaves (27). In this country, the children enter an unfamiliar realm where animals are larger and talk, the children's reflections in the mirror talk, and a man "not above four inches high" guides their journey (19-20). Although going to an unfamiliar place, the children still do not leave the domestic space of the plantation because the "queer country" is located inside the plantation's spring. This environment is large enough to supply exciting and new locations where girls can enjoy themselves without venturing into the potentially dangerous world outside the plantation.

Harris also spreads southern forms of domesticity into Mr. Thimblefinger's country, and the rules of slavery apply in this land. Animals may be able to talk here, but reality does not alter enough to emancipate Drusilla. When Sweetest Susan, Buster John, and their new friends eat dinner, Drusilla "waited on the table, as she did at home" (61). By maintaining this master/slave dynamic, the children bring the protocol of their home into this magical realm. Harris suggests that slavery benefits everyone, including magical creatures, because Drusilla serves them, too. Like the idealized plantation where these

children live, this fantasy world is another attempt to express a particularly white perception of slavery. They enact constructs of race where blackness means serving whites and whiteness means accepting that service. Spreading domestic protocols into new spaces, therefore, is a way for girls to protect the plantation's racial codes.

Through emphasizing outdoor adventures, Harris also constructs the outside areas of plantations as spaces for both genders and both races. Because Buster John and Sweetest Susan ride the horse, and both genders go to Mr. Thimblefinger's land, Harris indicates that white children on plantations need not participate in separate activities in separate locations because of their gender. As with the historical accounts of white girls like Anna Quitman or Mary Savage Conner engaging in rowdy, athletic behaviors, these pursuits are also open to Sweetest Susan. In fact, *The Story of Aaron* endorses this idea when Susan's grandfather approves of both children riding the wild horse Timoleon. The narrator comments that the grandfather "didn't want to see boys play the part of girls, nor girls act like dolls" (35). His view indicates that girls and boys should not act completely alike; however, girls should not remain static and fragile like dolls. Drusilla is also expected to engage in active behavior outside. For instance, when Aaron wants to introduce the children to the wild horse on which Sweetest Susan and Buster John later ride, Drusilla hesitates and doesn't want to go near the horse's stable because he is known for attacking people. Nevertheless, Drusilla must go because, as Sweetest Susan remarks, "She'll go if I do" (16). This scene demonstrates how black and white girls do not participate in outdoor activity in the same way. Sweetest Susan chooses to be outside, while Drusilla has no choice but to follow her young mistress and master. Moreover, Drusilla does not ride the horse, but she runs after the white children with Aaron (30).

Horseback riding is not a gender-specific activity, but it is only available to white children. This representation suggests maintaining racial difference is more important than upholding gender difference in plantation childhood, and these codes cannot be violated when all children engage in similar spaces and activities.

Through this immersion in the outdoors and their active behaviors there, plantation girls like Sweetest Susan and Drusilla diverge from representations of girls in other regions in children's literature of this era.[42] This difference becomes most apparent when considering the tomboy, a popular figure in girls' fiction of the Golden Age of children's literature. In works such as *Gypsy Breynton* (1866), *Little Women* (1868), and *What Katy Did* (1872), young heroines defy feminine expectations and adopt more masculine affinities and behaviors. Michelle Abate observes that such masculine traits include "a proclivity for outdoor play (especially athletics), a feisty independent spirit, and a tendency to don masculine clothing and adopt a boyish nickname" (xvi). In general, nineteenth-century American society also classified tomboys in these terms. In her examination of advice guides from this period, Sharon O'Brien asserts that a tomboy was viewed as a "noisy, energetic, romping girl who preferred boyish pursuits like climbing trees and running races to playing quietly with dolls and tea sets" (353). Tomboys, therefore, leave the home, which the nineteenth-century viewed as a more feminine space, and go outdoors, which was associated more with masculinity. Yet in these plantation novels, the outdoors becomes a feminine space as girls who are *not* classified

[42] Even in books set in more rural locations, such as Gene Stratton-Porter's *A Girl of the Limberlost* (1909), girls do not spend as much time outside as those on plantations. Furthermore, in *A Girl of the Limberlost*, Elnora Comstock uses the Limberlost swamp to sell insects and gain entry into a new setting—school. Conversely, plantation girls use the outside to engage in activities that keep them within that same setting.

as tomboys ride horses, go on walks, bring their dolls outside, read while sitting on tree branches, and play make-believe games throughout the plantation grounds. Abate explains that the figure of the tomboy changes with different historical eras, social classes, racial or ethnic groups, and regions (xii). Extending this claim, I assert that what constitutes tomboyism also changes in specific regional settings, such as the plantation in the nineteenth-century South.

Indeed, many of the traits that Abate and O'Brien identify as tomboyish are conventional expectations for plantation girls, including those classified as ladies. For instance, authors use the seemingly tomboyish word "romping" in reference to all girls, both black and white. According to the *OED*, to "romp" means "to play roughly or energetically" or "to sport or frolic in a lively, light-hearted, or boisterous manner." This definition describes the behaviors and activities of plantation girls, both inside the home and outside on the grounds. Finley frequently describes Elsie's daughters "romping" along with the boys on the veranda or in the avenue (*Womanhood* 342; *Motherhood* 70). In *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot,* the white and black girls have "romps and games" in their nursery (21). In a game imitating Indians scalping white settlers, the girls "ran in every direction" (38). Likewise, when Drusilla and Sweetest Susan travel to Mr. Thimblefinger's magical land, they "frolic" by jumping through "the gray fields with no trouble at all" (33). In fact, these southern girls engage in this type of energetic and boisterous play more often than they sit quietly and play with dolls; however, these behaviors do not classify the girls as tomboys. Unlike Katy Carr in *What Katy Did* who falls out of a swing as a punishment for her active behaviors, these southern girls are rewarded for their romping. In *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot,* for example, Pyrnelle portrays

the wild Indian game as a special treat because the slave girls are allowed to enter the Big House and the white girls ask other slave girls from the quarters to join their fun (41). Because the girls show through their active play that plantations offer a fun-filled childhood, Pyrnelle, Finley, and Harris do not identify such lively mannerisms as gender transgressions.

While most literary tomboys in the nineteenth century develop more conventionally feminine traits as they age, not all plantation girls go through this process. Jo March, for instance, must transform into a "little woman," but slave girls do not have this option because of their legal status. For example, Harris notes in the opening of *Little Mr. Thimblefinger* that Drusilla "was more of a child than either Sweetest Susan or Buster John" (5). Drusilla, who is twelve and five years older than Sweetest Susan, will always remain more childlike than her young mistress because racial categories take precedence over age categories in this society. Drusilla's perpetual childishness is not presented as a limitation, however, and Harris views plantation childhood as a rewarding and enjoyable experience. Nevertheless, Drusilla will never need to abandon wild, athletic behaviors because she is not expected to become an "adult" in the same way Sweetest Susan will. Likewise, the series concludes before Sweetest Susan ages, and Pyrnelle only provides a brief epilogue about Diddie and Dumps' adulthood that does not indicate if their mannerisms change. On the other hand, the girls in the Elsie Dinsmore series age into adults and become less rambunctious, but they occasionally express more masculine traits in defense of southern values.[43] Ultimately, children's postbellum

[43] For instance, Elsie's husband identifies marksmanship as an important skill for both genders to learn, and he wants to teach their daughter and their son how to shoot (*Motherhood* 28, 171).

plantation fiction is more concerned with the experience of childhood, rather than the process of growing into an adult, which allows writers to remain more nostalgic about the South and the landscapes of the South's past.

Focusing on the space of the plantation also allows us to see how these writers redefine tomboyism—and thus girlhood. The best example occurs in *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot*, where tomboyism does not signify a rejection of feminine preferences. Pyrnelle classifies the oldest white sister Diddie as "lady-like in her manners," while the middle white sister Dumps has "wild tomboyish ways" (14).[44] Yet Dumps is a different type of tomboy from popular ones like Jo March, Katy Carr, and Gypsy Breynton because she engages in more traditionally feminine activities. Dumps frequently plays with dolls, both when her sisters join her and when they do not. In one scene, Pyrnelle portrays Dumps assuming a maternal role as she "was rocking her doll back and forth," while Diddie reads (44). This distinction shows that Diddie—the lady—chooses to cultivate her intellect through writing, while Dumps—the tomboy—nurtures her pretend child. Dumps submits to this family duty instead of choosing an independent and less domestic task. Although Dumps is only five years old and may not have the literacy skills that her older sister does, Pyrnelle still suggests that the main leisure activity available to a girl of five is playing with dolls. Although Diddie, Tot, and the slave girls occasionally join Dumps in playing with dolls, Dumps is more frequently associated with them, and she never abandons her dolls for other games as a typical tomboy might do.

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[44] Because a white child is the only one labeled a tomboy, this designation demonstrates that certain models of girlhood are not available to slave children. As Abate points out, tomboyism in American literature and culture has been a racialized construct used to maintain white supremacy (xii). In this respect, *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot* follows typical patterns for the tomboy figure, yet Prynelle also complicates this figure by reconfiguring its masculine features and depicting these qualities in both black and white girls.

Dumps, however, is classified as a tomboy because she is wild. She is "full of fun and mischief, and gave Mammy a great deal of trouble on account of her wild, tomboyish ways" (14). In fact, Dumps' wildness is the one trait she does not share with her sisters. Unlike the other girls, Dumps is mischievous and unpredictable, as evidenced when she manipulates her sisters and slaves into disobeying Mammy's orders and playing at the gin house (50-51). She does not follow the racial protocol of the plantation and obey Mammy, as a proper slaveholding girl should do. In constantly speaking out of turn inciting trouble, Dumps is untamed, which challenges a social structure where the white inhabitants are supposed to appear more "domesticated" than their slaves. Dumps shows that tomboyism on this plantation is more contingent on wildness and crossing racial lines than on boyish traits.

In addition, all of the girls experience outdoor space on the plantation, so entry into these areas does not classify them as tomboys. On plantations, girls can engage in more "masculine" activities without becoming tomboys or transgressing gender expectations because they are not crossing a barrier when they venture outside into the slave quarters, grounds, or woods. In several instances, the girls in *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot* engage in rough and dirty play while fishing or frolicking in the woods. In one scene, the girls go "possum-huntin,'" and Pyrnelle's description of the hunt indicates that dirty outdoor activity characterizes all the girls: "They wandered off some distance, climbing over logs and falling into mud-puddles, for they all had their heads thrown back and their faces turned up to the trees, looking for the 'possums, and thereby missed seeing the impediments in the way" (188). Here, Diddie—the lady—becomes just as muddy as Dumps—the alleged tomboy. Moreover, both the white and black girls participate in the

possum hunt and become muddy. In Pyrnelle's construction of girlhood, then, muddy, outdoor behaviors do not indicate tomboyism or the girlhood of a specific race; rather, they are merely part of typical girlhood on a plantation. By entering the woods, these characters also show that plantation girlhood involves a particularly agrarian experience.

The Elsie Dinsmore series, especially *Elsie's Motherhood*, also indicates that the plantation grounds are a place for both genders. After Elsie grows up and marries, her children participate in the same types of outdoor pursuits. Her son Eddie and her eldest daughter (also named Elsie) ride ponies daily, "for their father wished them to learn to both ride and drive with ease and skill" (*Motherhood* 23). Little Elsie practices riding like her mother, and Eddie imitates his father, which suggests that the practice of riding differs in some gendered ways, but the children still engage in the same activity (23). Through riding with her brother, Little Elsie acquires a trait traditionally associated more with masculinity—the ability to travel independently.[45] If these children can successfully manage their ponies, then they can roam the plantation without the danger of falling off the pony or injuring themselves. With proper horsemanship, they enable the grounds away from the main house to be a safer place for them to play, and they can gain more exposure to the outdoors by riding across larger areas than they could walk or run. As a result, children of both genders can more easily establish a deeper connection with "the beauties of nature" (25). Although managing a horse was simply part of life before modern transportation, Edward Travilla's teachings also reinforce the inclusion of his children in the master class. Riding horses enables girls and boys to travel throughout the

[45] In children's literature of the Golden Age, travel typically occurs more with boy characters and in books intended for boys as boys leave the confines of home. Such books include Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885).

plantation and assert authority, showing that they have the "skill" indicative of the white aristocracy. They have the wealth to afford horses, as well as the leisure time to ride them. Little Elsie's and Eddie's horseback riding suggests that the plantation does not dictate gender-based activities, but it does shape daily pursuits that are dependent upon a specific racial and class status.

As Finley, Pyrnelle, and Harris use the space of the plantation to reconfigure girlhood as more outdoor-oriented and more active, they situate girls as the protectors of agrarian values. *Elsie's Motherhood,* for example, shows girls as the protectors of an agrarian ideal by emphasizing how Elsie's daughters develop a relationship with the natural landscape. In the first two books of Finley's series, Elsie Dinsmore seems like a girl confined to the walls of her grandfather's mansion, and her father even forbids her from walking outside alone or entering the meadow (*Elsie Dinsmore* 87-88); however, the outside becomes more prominent as the series progresses and Elsie has daughters. In *Elsie's Motherhood*, Elsie's children "had been taught to notice the beauties of nature—the changing clouds, the bright autumn foliage, plants and flowers, insects, birds, stones…and the elder ones now never returned from walk or ride without something to tell of what they had seen and enjoyed" (*Motherhood* 25-26). In this passage, the children not only "notice" nature, but they also create an active bond by repeatedly interacting with nature during their walks and rides—activities that are possible on a large, rural property. By reflecting upon what they observe and appreciate about their environment, the children express how nature impacts their thoughts and their daily activities, including walking and riding. This description suggests that these children have a particularly agrarian experience encountering nature in its purest form. The foliage is

"bright" because it is healthy, which may not be possible in an urban or industrial location. The fact that they "had been taught" to interact with nature in this manner indicates that forming this relationship with the outdoors is part of the upbringing of southern boys and girls.

This active, rural life makes the girlhood of Elsie's daughters seem more southern than her own childhood, one that primarily concerned praying and obeying her father. By the end of *Elsie's Womanhood* and in *Elsie's Motherhood*, the Civil War has concluded, yet these postbellum girls embrace the outdoors more than their mother did in the antebellum era. Perhaps the agrarian vision is more prominent at this point in the series because Finley wants to emphasize that southern landscapes can recover from the war's destruction. Indeed, during and directly after the war, the "lawn and gardens were wild," but by 1867, the plantation, Ion, is "restored to more than its pristine loveliness" (*Elsie's Womanhood* 342). In this pure, ordered environment, the plantation barely changes from prewar structures. The Dinsmores now pay their former slaves wages, yet those individuals live in the same slave cabins and still work the land, while the white children enjoy the land that black labor supports. Because the Dinsmores and Travillas maintain this labor structure, they retain a large property on which their children have the opportunity to form relationships with the land. In this postwar image of the plantation, "the children are romping with each other and their nurses, in the avenue," while Little Elsie "occupies a rustic seat a little apart from the rest" and reads her Bible (*Elsie's Womanhood* 342). These children can have fun by "romping," and the athletic activity most likely benefits their health. They can develop spiritually by having a place outside to seek God, unlike in the earlier novels where Elsie prays and reads her Bible inside.

Finally, the avenue provides a place for the children to form bonds with their mammies and continue to practice the race relations of the antebellum period. These personal, spiritual, and racial benefits contribute to the idea that an agrarian upbringing is advantageous, and these specific examples suggest to child readers that the activities of girls are a fundamental part of promoting this kind of plantation life.

The Lost (and Found) Cause

Ultimately, by considering the spatial features of plantations and the ways those features shape certain behaviors, we see how the Lost Cause that exists in these books is a mission dependent upon girls. This undertaking does not rely on male politicians fighting Reconstruction policies or legalizing Jim Crow laws, such as Plessy v. Ferguson (1896), which occurred as Harris' and Finley's books were being written and read. Instead of a male planter implementing a sharecropping system to maintain plantation structures after the Civil War, girls reinforce that lifestyle through the places they go and how they act in those locations. For example, the slave Drusilla is the strongest advocate of this lifestyle in Harris' *Plantation Pageants* (1899), which takes place during and after emancipation. After Sherman's army marches across Georgia but surprisingly leaves Drusilla's and Sweetest Susan's plantation unharmed, most of the slaves leave. Most freedmen "flocked to the towns and cities," taking advantage of the opportunity to move into new settings (19). Drusilla, however, insists on staying. When her mother Jemimy wants to go, Drusilla declares, "I'll do anything but dat; I'll tell lies, I'll steal, but I won't go off frum here; dey got to kill me dead an' tote me" (7). Through Drusilla's stasis, Harris shows how a girl impacts the future of whites and blacks on the plantation. Because her mother Jemimy refuses to leave her, Drusilla's stubbornness keeps herself

and her mother on the plantation. Consequently, Susan's family retains their cook, and Susan and Buster John continue to have their nurse and playmate. Drusilla also enables the white children to continue directing her movement on the plantation, instead of controlling her own mobility like the slaves who leave. In effect, Drusilla's refusal to leave perpetuates the white family's ability to maintain an elite lifestyle as neighboring plantations crumble. In a post-emancipation world, they remain the master class, while Drusilla and her mother remain slaves.

These statuses continue in the series' final book, *Wally Wanderoon and His Story-telling Machine*, which introduces Reconstruction-era plantation structures—tenant farming and sharecropping. With a tenant-farming system, Harris represents how the layout of the plantation shifts, and black workers relocate from a row of slave cabins to individual plots of land spread throughout the plantation. Drusilla now lives "at the farthest limits of the plantation, which was nearly three miles from the home place" (4). Harris then indicates this spatial reorganization threatens to make plantation girlhood less southern: it could make the bond between white and black girls less codependent. Drusilla is unhappy because "she had been brought up with playmates to choose from, as it were, and she was in no mind to bury herself on the plantation away from the companionship of those who could amuse her, or whom she could amuse" (5). Yet Harris demonstrates how postwar domestic arrangements do not keep prewar companionship from dissolving, and a distance of three miles does not stop Sweetest Susan and Buster John from directing Drusilla. Sweetest Susan and Buster John arrive at Drusilla's cabin, telling her to join them on a journey to a neighboring farm. Like a loyal slave, Drusilla immediately obeys their command and feels "glad" (7). Like masters, the children

continue to dictate Drusilla's movement. On this postwar plantation, then, Harris continues to define southern girlhood as an experience bound by codependent racial identities and agrarian outdoor play.

In suggesting these forms of plantation girlhood will continue beyond the antebellum period, Harris embodies how postbellum plantation fiction creates a fantasy of girlhood. In the antebellum time period in which these books were set, girls did not have as much agency as their fictional counterparts—especially slave girls. Nevertheless, these texts preserve an idealized vision of antebellum girlhood and plantation life in postbellum imaginations; these authors re-create girlhood so the texts can perform cultural work by romanticizing southern values. The texts advance this agenda by situating fictional girls as protectors of plantation lifestyles. Girls are particularly strong protectors of the plantation because of the experiences afforded by the plantation's nuclear arrangement and the expanded domestic areas. The nuclear structure assigns white girls power, while subordinating black girls, and both positions are necessary to protect lifestyles in this environment. From romping with mammies in the avenue to obeying masters in Mr. Thimblefinger's land, girls of both races are the ones responsible for extending southern domesticity on the plantation. They ensure the slave system thrives in the outlying areas, including the slave cabins, the woods, and secret fantasy lands. By adhering to their roles as masters and slaves in these places, they suggest that a rural plantation lifestyle is important because it enables girls to uphold racial codes in a larger arena beyond the Big House.

As these writers use southern girls to feminize the outdoors, they are reimagining several tropes in nineteenth-century girlhood, which identifies how southern girls differ

from those in other regions. In general, Finley, Pyrnelle, and Harris disrupt the association between girlhood and indoor spaces. The plantation household enables girls to enter outdoor places they would not have the opportunity to go to in other types of homes. As a result, this setting rearranges gender designations, complicating the tomboy figure and feminizing romping, outside behaviors. On plantations, girls can engage in these pursuits without becoming tomboys because they are protecting agrarian values. Agrarian girlhood, therefore, permits some fluidity in the line between conventional femininity and tomboyism.

Additionally, these writers use the space and protocols of the plantation to reconceptualize girl companionship in children's literature. In children's literature of this time period, typical friendships between girls of similar class and racial backgrounds help the girls learn empathy or learn to provide mutual support for each other; however, friendship between black and white southern girls helps them to learn their jobs on the plantation. As a result, Harris, Pyrnelle, and Finley suggest that friendships among different races in the South are always based on a hierarchy. It emphasizes the elite status of the white girl and the slave status of the black girl. Even in the *Elsie Dinsmore* books where white girls bond with adult slaves, rather than girl slaves, this dynamic still accentuates the white supremacist hierarchy as the defining feature of interracial relationships in which girls engage.

In reorganizing girl companionship and domestic spaces, these postwar planation novels disrupt adult/child hierarchies by illustrating how girls are powerful forces in southern homes. Yet the power of girls is not rewarding, even if authors suggest it is. White girls are oppressive, and black girls are forced to promote a system that oppresses

them. Both black and white girls perform ideological work by preserving white supremacist hierarchies and promoting agrarianism. Girl slaveholders have the authority to dictate the management of the household, and they are responsible for upholding these protocols more so than adult women, who are mostly absent or, in the case of Elsie Dinsmore's mother, dead. Ultimately, Finley, Pyrnelle, and Harris construct plantation girlhood as an experience that challenges the traditional notion of home as a place where children defer to their parents, and these books encourage their readers to follow suit. In that sense, the books also function to preserve the Lost Cause. These books give white child readers a model of social interaction in which they should aspire to an elite position, including readers from a lower class status. Finley, Pyrnelle, and Harris show readers a world where girls are not confined by walls made of wood or brick; however, other more restrictive walls result from the racial codes that regulate interactions between masters and slaves. These codes form well-defined barriers that plantation girls cannot cross, even when they venture away from the Big House.

CHAPTER V

REMAKING THE PLANTATION IN EARLY-TWENTIETH-CENTURY FAMILY STORIES

In 1912, Mildred Lewis Rutherford, the Historian General of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, delivered a speech entitled "The South in the Building of a Nation" in which she proclaimed, "There is no new South. The South of today is the South of yesterday remade to fit the new order of things. And the men of today and the women of today are readjusting themselves to the old South remade" (*Four Addresses* 14). What Rutherford calls "the old South remade" was a concept prevalent among white southerners in the early twentieth century. From Jim Crow legislation to reunions of Confederate veterans, the white South worked to perpetuate a social and cultural order that preserved certain aspects of nineteenth-century systems. To advance these efforts, the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), in particular, impressed an image of the antebellum South upon children. As Karen Cox has found, the UDC put pro-Confederate textbooks in schools; organized activities at schools to celebrate the birthdays of Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis; and organized the Children of the Confederacy, open to youth between the ages of six and eighteen (2-3, 127). These adult efforts indoctrinated white girls into a southern cultural identity that emphasized their ability to memorialize the past.

The *Confederate Veteran,* a monthly magazine published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, clearly indicates how white southerners tasked girls with remaking an earlier version of the South. The April 1900 edition contains an article describing the "Confederate work" of girls in a UDC chapter. Among other activities, the

girls decorated Confederate graves on Memorial Day. The "little ones" aged eight to fourteen donned "Confederate colors, red and white silk" and had a tea party to raise funds for war veterans (Figure 5). One girl wrote a play and earned money for Confederate widows through the performance (Walke 151). This portrait of southern girlhood differs from another image in the magazine's December issue. An unnamed "young negro girl" from Alabama stands beside an old man, a blind peddler who the accompanying story commemorates for selling food to soldiers during the Civil War (Figure 6). Thirty-five years later, the man is destitute except for this girl, who "goes on errands for him" ("Thrilling Heroism" 527). Though one image focuses on a community of volunteers and the other shows an individual who probably has less choice in the type of work she completes, both of these pictures suggest that southern girlhood involved service to the South. By helping others, these girls glorify the Confederacy and perpetuate racial hierarchies based on a white master/black slave dynamic. Through portraying this service, the *Confederate Veteran* positions girls as a central part of the effort to protect southern culture, which is surprising considering this magazine devotes a large amount of space to valorizing male war heroes and, through its title, implies those men who were once protectors of the Confederacy are still a foundational tenet of this society. Yet at the turn of the century, many Confederate veterans were disabled and aging; these men now relied on the help of girls, who could continue their mission of protecting southern cultural identities rooted in antebellum and Confederate values.

Figure 5. The "Young Daughters of the Confederacy" tea party from the *Confederate Veteran.* From Mrs. Frank Anthony Walke, "Young Daughters of the Confederacy," *Confederate Veteran* 8.4 (1900): 151. Courtesy McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi.

Figure 6. The *Confederate Veteran* shows a black girl who works for a blind white peddler. Picture titled "Felix G. Hubbard, Opelika, Ala." From "Thrilling Heroism of Confederates," *Confederate Veteran*, 8.12 (1900): 527. Courtesy McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi.

Writers of children's family stories also position girls as central figures in this mission. At the turn of the century, three authors—Annie Fellows Johnston, Alice Hegan

Rice, and Mary White Ovington—present the family as the primary institution in which girls can remake the Old South. Using the genre of the children's family story, which foregrounds the intricacies of family relationships instead of having them as background features, all three of these writers call attention to the ways girls guide their families into an antebellum past. While Rutherford sees adult men and women "readjusting" to the past, these writers, like the examples from the *Confederate Veteran,* suggest that girls and their roles within families enable that "readjusting" process. Girls accomplish this readjusting; therefore, these authors all reproduce plantation environments in post-Civil War homes. Johnston and Rice were friends and belonged to the same writing group in Louisville, where they developed these books, so it is likely that their books would share similarities; however, Ovington lived in the North, was an activist for black civil rights, and was one of the founders of the NAACP. The similarities between Ovington's book and those by two ardent southerners suggest that trends in depictions of southern girlhood are more widespread across children's literature at this time.

Though their girl characters are protectors like those in other literary categories, the family stories examined in this chapter show girl protectors in more varied social classes. The Little Colonel series (1895-1912) by Annie Fellows Johnston follows the adventures of a Kentucky girl named Lloyd Sherman and her friends. Although this popular series spans 14 books, I focus on the first installment, *The Little Colonel*, which charts Lloyd's journey from genteel poverty to wealth in a town near Louisville. This transition occurs as Lloyd reunites her parents with her wealthy estranged grandfather. Next, I examine two books by Alice Hegan Rice, *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* (1901) and its sequel *Lovey Mary* (1903). These works tell the stories of working-class

white families in a slum in Louisville, Kentucky called the Cabbage Patch. *Mrs. Wiggs* concentrates on a widowed woman who creates a loving home for her five children in spite of poverty and hardships. *Lovey Mary* tells of an orphan girl who finds redemption when she moves to the Cabbage Patch and befriends the Wiggs family. Lastly, *Hazel* (1913) by Mary White Ovington focuses on a middle-class black girl. A groundbreaking book in the development of African American children's literature, *Hazel* was one of the first children's novels specifically written for black children.[46] In *Hazel*, a Boston girl temporarily lives with her grandmother in Alabama in order to improve her health and behavior, and the domestic spaces of a rural black community reconnect this girl with her southern heritage. *Hazel* is a transition text, pointing towards new trends in representations of black girls but imagining a South similar to the elite, white narrative prominent at this time. When examined together, these books by Ovington, Rice, and Johnston provide an understanding of how fictional girls from different racial and class backgrounds, as well as different home environments, contribute to a construction of girlhood that is specific to region.

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[46] Scholars disagree over the first book intended for black child readers. Dianne Johnson designates the first as *Clarence and Corinne; or God's Way* (1890) by Amelia Johnson, who was the first black woman to write a children's book. However, other scholars such as Violet J. Harris and Rudine Sims Bishop note that *Clarence and Corinne* was not written specifically for black children or about the experiences of black children. Instead, both Bishop and Harris list poetry collections as the first book of African American children's literature: Bishop mentions *Morning Glories* (1890) by Josephine Henderson Heard, and Harris notes Paul Laurence Dunbar's *Little Brown Baby* (1895). Only a few other books appear before *Hazel*'s publication, most of which are not novels, such as the conduct manual *Floyd's Flowers: or Duty and Beauty for Colored Children* (1905) by Silas Floyd. Out of these works, *Floyd's Flowers* and *Hazel* are the first African American children's books to feature southern girls.

Although the girls in these books do not live on plantations, these authors represent domestic sites with spatial layouts and protocols similar to those of a plantation. I use historical information about towns, cities, and rural black communities to show how the town in *The Little Colonel*, the urban slum in Rice's books, and the farm community in *Hazel* all follow this pattern. By considering how girls act in these spaces, I argue that Johnston, Rice, and Ovington construct southern girlhood as an experience that protects plantation domestic structures. In these works, young female characters have the most mobility between various households and domestic sites. As a result, girls—sometimes more so than adults—are responsible for preserving connections to the physical space of the plantation, its racial protocol, and its agrarian values. Collectively, these three authors suggest that southern girls of different race and class backgrounds all play a significant role in shaping and perpetuating antebellum values within their families.

These books by Johnston, Rice, and Ovington are especially valuable to consider because their constructions of southern girls reached a wide variety of readers in the early twentieth century. In fact, Johnston's and Rice's books were some of the most popular children's books of this time period.[47] By the 1930s, the Little Colonel series had sold over 1 million copies (Marshall 144). Likewise, *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* ranked number two on *Publishers Weekly* bestseller list in 1902, and *Lovey Mary* ranked number

[47] According to a 1913 article in the children's periodical *St. Nicholas*, Johnston was "the most popular modern writer of girls' books in the United States" (Vandercook 129). Both Johnston's and Rice's books were so well received that they inspired toys and movie franchises. Along with the *Little Colonel* books, there were dolls, rings, a diary for girls called *The Little Colonel's Good Times Book*, a board game, and the 1935 film adaptation starring Shirley Temple (Marshall 144). In addition, four film adaptations were made of *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* between 1914 and 1942, with accompanying dolls, puzzles, and children's clothing. A play version was performed throughout the country in the early twentieth century (Rice *Inky Way* 183).

four in 1903 ("*Publishers Weekly* List"). Much less popular than Johnston and Rice, Ovington's *Hazel* circulated among black readers and was liked enough that a group of children in New York performed a play version in 1916 (Wedin 206). Unlike earlier nineteenth-century texts—especially abolitionist and Confederate works—that reached a more limited number of children, these early-twentieth-century books were read by children throughout the country and children from a variety of racial backgrounds. As a result, an image linking southern girls to plantation-like environments spread on a national scale.

More recently, however, these books have passed out of popularity, and they have also received limited critical attention. The most discussion centers on *Hazel* because of its landmark status in the development of African American children's literature. Scholars such as Rudine Sims Bishop, Violet Harris, and Gail Schmunk Murray have noted that *Hazel* marks a radical change in representations of black characters in children's literature: for instance, Ovington inserts more realism and fewer racist stereotypes in the characters of Hazel, her friends, and her family. In contrast, critics focus less on race when discussing Johnston's or Rice's books. Most scholarship on The Little Colonel series examines gender and girlhood. For instance, Murray and Sue Lynn McGuire argue that The Little Colonel books encourage girls to aspire to the traditional roles of wife and mother rather than to emerging twentieth-century conceptions of the New Woman. Likewise, Sarah Clere maintains that girls in The Little Colonel series remain limited by those traditional expectations even as they engage in the public through Progressive- era reform efforts. While almost no critical work has been done on *Lovey Mary,* the most extensive examination of *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* shifts away

from race and gender. Earl F. Bargainnier sees *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* expressing a southern local color tradition of humor and sentimentality. This chapter brings together these conversations about place, race, and gender by focusing on plantation-like environments.

At the turn of the century when these books were written and read, the antebellum plantation was being reproduced in a variety of landscapes. Though some scholars question whether the end of the Civil War officially ended the plantation system, others such as Charles Aiken and Stewart Tolnay assert that sharecropping and tenant farms retained many features of plantations.[48] Though sharecropping cabins spread out across individual farms instead of sitting in a concentrated row like most quarters on antebellum plantations, these areas were still managed by one (typically white) landowner who owned the individual farms. In addition, these New South plantations specialized in one type of crop, such as cotton or tobacco, and they formed what Aiken calls a "nuclear settlement complex" (7). The various outlying buildings—the sharecropper cabins—were still united by central buildings, such as cotton gins, warehouses, or other places to process crops. As a result, sharecroppers were not entirely independent farmers because they often relied on the landowner for these services and for farming equipment (74). As plantations remained in rural areas, plantation-like spaces also appeared in towns and cities. According to David Goldfield, the southern city at this time was "much closer to the plantation than it is to Chicago and New York" because of rural features, such as

[48] Edward Royce, for instance, argues that sharecropping signaled the end of the plantation because it was now a family-farm system and the land was not worked by gang labor (2).

unpaved roads (3). Particularly in towns and cities, plantation-like organizations persisted especially in terms of segregating white and black residents into different living areas.

In the family stories by Johnston, Rice, and Ovington, girls protect plantation-like spaces and places. According to Barbara Heath, space is an area with physical dimensions, while place involves the ways individuals perceive and experience spaces. Place is therefore more of a construction (159). In addition to actual working plantations, the plantation can extend into a variety of environments and social situations as a lifestyle that creates a sense of the plantation as a place. In fact, in the postslavery period, especially in the twentieth century, Elizabeth Christine Russ argues the plantation is "not primarily a physical location but rather an insidious ideological and psychological trope" (3). To perpetuate the plantation as a mindset, the books examined in this chapter depict plantation-like spaces through certain arrangements of buildings and outdoor areas and through projecting social meanings onto those spaces. For instance, the nucleated spatial layout that is indicative of a plantation appears in Lloyd's grandfather's estate in *The Little Colonel,* the city of Louisville in Rice's books, and the black community in *Hazel* (7). In addition, these books emphasize several other features of plantations: home is a site of labor and domesticity, and home encompasses both indoor and outdoor areas. The physical dimensions of these spaces do not form from walls and roofs but from gates, fences, public roads, property lines, and nearby woods.

Because of these spatial features, girls in family stories help to construct a sense of place that correlates with the experience of the plantation, particularly in terms of racial and agrarian codes. Segregated spaces, for example, lead characters to follow protocols that imitate master/slave relationships. Likewise, though many of these girls

have ties to cities and towns, they continually return to spaces that afford rural and agricultural lifestyles. A plantation-like sense of place also entails a certain type of family dynamic. The labor-intensive aspects of the plantation created a network of black and white—and occasionally mixed-race—individuals that formed non-nuclear, multi-generational, and non-biological units. In fact, historians such as Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Peter Kolchin have noted that slaveholders typically viewed themselves and their slaves as part of one family, and the idea of family functioned to enforce and justify the oppression of the slave system. In the books by Johnston, Rice, and Ovington, girl characters are creators of these types of nontraditional, extended families. By presenting girls as creators rather than just members of families, the books examined in this chapter deviate from depictions of family life in the other chapters. These girls forge bonds between disparate related and non-related individuals. Lloyd Sherman reunites her estranged grandfather with her parents. Lovey Mary creates a home with an abandoned toddler, a woman, and the woman's nephew. Finally, Hazel meets her grandmother for the first time and forms a two-person unit. By emphasizing an extended sense of family, these authors present a fluid concept of the southern family, suggesting that girls are valuable in any version of the family. In effect, Johnston, Rice, and Ovington indicate that southern girls have the ability to guide different types of families in varying landscapes toward a plantation lifestyle.

My Old Kentucky Home: Plantation Life in a Town

In The Little Colonel series by Annie Fellows Johnston, a fictional Kentucky town called Lloydsboro shapes southern girlhood. In the first book in the series, Johnston introduces five-year-old Lloyd Sherman, who moves from the North to Lloydsboro where

her mother grew up and her grandfather still lives. Though Lloyd's mother married a Yankee and left home after the Civil War, her mother's decision to relocate suggests that southern ties should not be abandoned in a postwar setting. Lloydsboro, as Johnston explains in her autobiography, *The Land of the Little Colonel*, is based on Pewee Valley, Kentucky, the hometown of Johnson's stepchildren and where she lived during two different periods in her life. Located eleven miles east of Louisville, Pewee Valley was an elite resort town in the late nineteenth century. For Johnson, though, Pewee Valley was a place where the southern elite could reconnect with the past. In *The Land of the Little Colonel,* she says of her time there, "I felt as if I had stepped back into a beautiful story of ante-bellum days. Back into the times when people had leisure to make hospitality their chief business in life and could afford for every day to be a holiday; when there were always guests under the spreading rooftree of the great house, and laughter and singing in the servant's quarters" (95). Johnston's description here evokes plantation spaces. The house is "great" like a Big House, and the "spreading rooftree" seems to extend that house past its physical structure and into the grounds to create enjoyable experiences for people. The word "rooftree" also calls attention to the fluidity between indoor and outdoor spaces, as if the roof merges with the nearby foliage. Finally, the mention of servant's quarters makes this site appear like a plantation with a large amount of laborers. Describing "happy" black workers in their designated quarters and white leisure activities in a separate location, Johnston also perpetuates the plantation myth of southerners preferring and benefitting from white supremacist social codes. Pewee Valley therefore connected Johnston to a particularly plantation-like past, which she replicates in the portrayal of Lloydsboro.

At the time in which *The Little Colonel* is set—which is unclear but assumed to be during or directly after Reconstruction—small southern towns shared similarities with the landscape of plantations. Throughout the late nineteenth century, the number of small towns increased in southern states as railroad lines extended into new areas, but many residents of towns still had rural experiences. As John Beck, Wendy Frandsen, and Aaron Randall note, "To an extent, town and country were more a continuum than two separate entities" (25). Most small towns were located within a few miles from farms, and residents often owned property and houses in both the town and the countryside (26). In addition, as Edward Ayers notes, many towns formed from the need to have a location for stores and places to turn crops into marketable items, such as cotton gins and mills, especially as plantations divided into smaller farms and no longer provided these services (56). Instead of the Big House or another building functioning as the central site, towns became the hub for rural communities, especially with places like post offices and railroad stations. Though full of streets, buildings, and multiple homes and yards, towns in the late nineteenth century were still fairly rural.

Domestic spaces within towns also had rural features. During the time period in which Johnston wrote and set The Little Colonel books, most homes in southern small towns had yards with vegetable gardens (Beck, Frandsen, and Randall 26). Though not farmers or plantation owners, town residents used the land to sustain their basic needs, and in doing so, they expanded domestic space beyond the walls enclosing their homes and into outdoor locations. In the first book, Lloyd's home has similar characteristics. Lloyd, her mother, and her mammy Mom Beck live in genteel poverty in a "little cottage" (*Little Colonel* 31). The characters spend much of their time outside the actual

cottage building. In one scene, for example, the mother rests in a hammock on the porch, while Lloyd plays in the yard with her dog (28). Though there is no mention of a garden and Mom Beck presumably manages food production, the outside is a place of relaxation and leisure for the white residents, much like it would be on a plantation. Johnston also notes that the cottage sits adjacent to the woods, where Mom Beck and Lloyd walk through on their way to other sites in town, such as the hotel (*Little Colonel* 32). Through the exterior locations and natural environments, Johnson emphasizes how individuals living in the town can still have rural experiences.

While the cottage replicates some plantation-like spaces and experiences, Locust—Lloyd's grandfather's estate in the town—has an even stronger correlation with plantations, particularly through its spatial layout. Evoking an image of the columned mansions popular in the plantation myth, Locust contains "white pillars" and a "long avenue that stretched for nearly a quarter of a mile between rows of stately old locust-trees" (*Little Colonel* 9-10). A common feature of plantations, the avenue functioned as a controlled point of access directing people to the most important and most powerful site on the property—the Big House. As Jon Vlach points out, the avenue was "intended to make the house, and its owner, appear more impressive" (5). In Johnston's novel, the locust trees form a passageway that guides visitors to such a spot. The illustration in Figure 7 emphasizes this view through the tunnel-like trees that lead the reader to focus on the house. Though in the background, the house and its columns still tower over Lloyd and her mother in the foreground, expressing the power of the Big House upon people who do not live inside it. While the columns surrounding the house also exude a sense of strength, they provide a gate-like barrier, which is reinforced by the actual gate dividing

the property from the public road where Lloyd and her mother stand. These bars separate the elite space of the planter from anyone who enters the property, including whites of lower social classes and black laborers. The Colonel has enough money to build pillars around his home, and he owns enough land to have an avenue that stretches a quarter of a mile. In short, these plantation-like spatial features signify class superiority.

Figure 7. The avenue at Locust. Picture from *The Little Colonel*, Boston: L. C. Page & Company, 1904, page 69. Courtesy of the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi.

In addition to looking like a plantation, Locust also operates like one by following slaveholding domestic protocols. Lloyd's grandfather is the sole white resident with an assortment of black workers, including a maid, a cook, and his personal "body-servant" (*Little Colonel* 27). These black servants call him "Marse Lloyd," which maintains antebellum work relationships thirty years after emancipation (*Little Colonel* 16). These workers live in cabins on the property, thus perpetuating a plantation structure with slave

quarters located in marginal areas beyond the avenue and Big House. Locust further evokes a particularly historical version of the plantation, instead of a New South plantation, through its connection to Confederate customs. Long after the Civil War, Lloyd's grandfather is still called "Colonel Lloyd," and the narrator observes, "there was a military precision about him" (*Little Colonel* 15). By retaining this military title and appearance, he still operates with a Confederate mindset, in spite of the changes brought by the war. He retains a divisive perspective, detesting Lloyd's mother because she married a northerner and chastising Lloyd for "Yankee" traits she gained from her father. At times, "the old bitterness came back redoubled in its force" (27), which implies that sectional division is even stronger now than before the war. This "bitterness" leads the Colonel to assume more of a tyrannical relationship with his servants, as he goes "stamping down the avenue, roaring for Walker, his body-servant" (27). Because of his Confederate mindset, he holds onto slaveholding protocols where he asserts his authority verbally over black workers. By looking and operating like a plantation, Locust perpetuates the plantation myth in a site that is technically not a plantation since there is no mention of fields. Men like the Colonel may not be able to maintain the crop production and economic value of plantations in a postwar setting without antebellum wealth and large amounts of workers at their disposal. As a result, preserving this environment's domestic traditions instead of the economic ones is more feasible.

With a focus on domestic spaces, Johnston also draws attention to the areas where girls have the most influence. Locust and the cottage are the two dominant homes in *The Little Colonel*, and Lloyd often travels between the two areas, illustrating the "continuum" between town and country that Beck, Frandsen, and Randall identify (25).

According to a map of Pewee Valley from 1879, the sites upon which Johnston based Locust and the cottage are approximately six-tenths of a mile apart ("Map of Lloydsboro Valley").[49] Locust therefore is not far from the center of town where the cottage sits, yet Johnston's description of the journey to and from Locust makes it appear more isolated and more rural. When returning to the cottage, for example, Lloyd goes "down the steep embankment" and "into an unfrequented lane" (*Little Colonel* 55). The word "down" also implies Locust sits on a higher elevation and is higher in importance than the surrounding areas, much like the nuclear positioning of a plantation's Big House. This location indicates that Lloyd can still easily experience agrarian life, even though she lives in a town.

In addition, Lloyd suggests that girls are the only ones who can bridge new forms of agrarian life in town with older versions at plantation-like estates. In fact, Lloyd is the only character who goes inside both the cottage and Locust. In one scene, her grandfather takes her home from a visit at Locust, but he leaves her outside the cottage fence. She then "scramble[s] through a hole in the fence" (*Little Colonel* 58). Only a small child could fit through such a hole; therefore, her small size allows her to leave the cottage and travel to Locust whenever she pleases, even without adult supervision. As a result, Lloyd demonstrates how girls can pass through spatial barriers erected by adults because of their youth.

Through her spatial mobility, Lloyd repeatedly visits Locust and learns how to be a proper southern girl. In particular, she learns to assume the class and racial designations of white girls who live on plantations. Initially, Lloyd does not understand this system,

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[49] This distance is from the cottage to the beginning of the avenue at the estate upon which Johnston based Locust.

and she disrupts the class and racial boundaries that form the foundation of this estate. In one scene, Lloyd and three black children, including a girl named May Lilly, play on the "stately front steps" and pretend to cook items (*Little Colonel* 41). On the one hand, Lloyd follows a plantation protocol of white superiority: she directs the game by stirring mud in a pot, orders the black children to fetch her items, and assumes authority on a structure that is part of the Big House (41). Here, Johnston romanticizes Locust as a place where black and white children happily express white supremacist hierarchies through play. On the other hand, the children challenge the status quo of Colonel Lloyd's rules by playing together in an area designated for black service and white authority. Indeed, the steps to the Big House visually signal a rise in hierarchy as individuals ascend them and move from the marginal yard—the domain of black workers—to the central house—where the Colonel lives. Yet Lloyd and the black children violate that hierarchy by making it less of a segregated space, as the Colonel expresses by shouting, "Here, you little pickaninnies!...What did I tell you about playing around here, tracking dirt all over my premises? You just chase back to the cabin where you belong!" (*Little Colonel* 42). The Colonel suggests that black children "belong" in the cabin because their behaviors will taint the cleanliness of his house. They will make the white steps blacker by tracking dirt onto them with their bare feet. In doing so, they will mar the white racial purity that the Big House represents. Johnston further expresses this idea when Lloyd spills a mud pie "on the white steps," which gives her a "soiled dress and muddy hands" (*Little Colonel* 42). Lloyd literally turns the house darker, and she becomes blacker. In reducing the distance between white and black, therefore, Lloyd shows the fragility of racial

barriers—and why they must be maintained in this society. In order to maintain white superiority, race must designate the space that individuals inhabit.

In this scene, Lloyd learns that she cannot cross barriers of class and race. According to the Colonel, "It was one of his theories that a little girl should always be kept as fresh and dainty as a flower" (*Little Colonel* 43). For this reason, he chastises Lloyd: "What does your mother mean…by letting you run barefooted around the country just like poor white trash? An' what are you playing with low-flung niggers for? Haven't you ever been taught any better? I suppose it's some of your father's miserable Yankee notions" (*Little Colonel* 43). By classifying Lloyd's behavior as "Yankee," the Colonel indicates that southern girls like Lloyd must maintain class and racial superiority in all of their appearances and behaviors—especially at a place like Locust. Alternatively, Lloyd can have a boyish name and cross some gender boundaries, but the class and racial barriers are more rigid than gender in her society. She needs to be working to maintain these distinctions like a slaveholder, instead of only playing with the black children like a friend.

This adherence to class and racial codes constructs a plantation-like sense of place at Locust. Ultimately, Lloyd's repeated visits cause the estranged family to reunite, and they all move to Locust permanently, where they live for the remainder of the series. Lloyd reconstructs her immediate family as a large biracial network of masters and workers. Instead of only having Mom Beck, Lloyd and her parents gain many black servants, including those who live in Locust's quarters. More clearly delineating class and race barriers, Lloyd gains white friends as the series progresses and no longer plays with black children. Instead, black children exist to complete chores, such as when Lloyd

orders May Lilly to fetch food for her dog in *The Little Colonel's Hero* (1902). Through this representation, Johnston establishes Locust as a place of both labor and domesticity, where individuals have unequal roles in this family.

In addition to implementing these race relations, Lloyd shows how Locust offers a plantation lifestyle through its agrarian aspects. She repeatedly enjoys outdoor athletic behaviors, such as fishing, hunting coons, swinging on vines, and playing lawn tennis. In *The Little Colonel's House Party*, for instance, she travels to "the old stone mill" and passes through "meadow gates, and over a narrow pasture lot, then up a little hill and into a cool beech woods" (135). As Lloyd ventures into pastures and meadows, Johnston shows that farm landscapes benefit Lloyd by providing multiple types of play areas. Lloyd demonstrates how all of these places are rewarding; therefore, she is not confined to the borders of Locust, but she explores more outlying areas, passing through other spatial barriers such as gates. In the woods, Lloyd and her friends can have a picnic and strengthen their sense of community (135). Furthermore, Lloyd and her friends use this space to develop race relations of white superiority. During the picnic, "little pickaninnies" perform charades to entertain Lloyd and her friends (139). As with experiences on plantations, this outdoor activity is more rewarding for the white girls; therefore, it reflects a southern, agrarian tradition. Here, outdoor play for black characters involves service to white characters, and outdoor play for white characters involves enjoying that service.

In The Little Colonel series, outdoor activities typically carry racial undertones. Most notably, Lloyd rides her pony Tar Baby throughout Lloydsboro and the surrounding rural areas. She names Tar Baby "after her favorite Uncle Remus story" (*House Party*

13), which is a reference to a character in Joel Chandler Harris' first and most popular book, *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings* (1880). In *Uncle Remus*, Br'er Fox makes the Tar Baby to trick Br'er Rabbit, and a white boy growing up on a plantation hears this story from an elderly slave as a way to romanticize plantation life. By naming her pony Tar Baby, Lloyd brings that same nostalgic mindset into the twentieth century. Johnston suggests the features of nineteenth-century plantation childhood, including the stories that enabled white children to imagine racist southern identities, shape twentieth-century southern girlhood. "Tar Baby" has traditionally been used as a racial slur in reference to black individuals, and Lloyd continues this convention since her Tar Baby is an animal over which she exerts complete control—much like the "pickaninnies" or other black servants at Locust. The Tar Baby reference identifies Lloyd's agrarian activities as southern, linking blackness with service and whiteness with privilege.

Through her time in outdoor locations, Lloyd maintains racial divisions, but she does not cross gender barriers and become more tomboyish. Instead, the narrator describes her as a "womanly little maid" when she is outside riding her horse (*House Party* 13). In addition, the same activities she completes inside the house—reading, writing, and drawing—are often relocated to the yard. The walls of this southern house do not enclose proper young ladies; rather, these walls form a flexible barrier that permits domestic activities in a variety of locations. Because of her elite status, however, Lloyd, however, enjoys the benefits of a large yard, as well as a large property that sits adjacent to pastures and woods. On a plantation-like estate, the black children and adult workers complete the chores, so Lloyd has the time for these outdoor leisure pursuits. This type of

agrarian girlhood goes beyond promoting natural landscapes, as the pastoral tradition would do, and reinforces class and racial divisions.

By constructing an agrarian form of girlhood, Johnston emphasizes Lloyd's southern features. As the series progresses, Lloyd enters more urban spaces away from Locust, and for this reason, Clere argues that Johnston deemphasizes Lloyd's regional identity in favor of a more national identity (108). While Lloyd certainly shares similarities with her friends from other regions, the continual return to rural activities at Locust ties her to her southern roots. Furthermore, Lloyd impresses these features upon her friends from other regions, showing how it can reward them. Throughout the series, girls from Arizona and New York visit Lloyd, and they join her in riding ponies, travelling through the woods, and hunting coons. With these interactions, Johnston indicates that girls from other regions need to experience a southern domestic environment so they can participate in outdoor activity. During a visit in *The Little Colonel: Maid of Honor* (1906), Mary, an Arizona girl, comments, "No wonder Lloyd is so bright and interesting when she has been brought up in such an atmosphere" (69). In a plantation-like space, girls can become "bright" and "interesting" because they engage in so many different pursuits inside and outside. Moreover, Mary makes this remark when Lloyd is in her late teenage years, which suggests that homes like Locust enable girls to retain outdoor mobility and activity even as they approach womanhood. The longer girls hold onto these traits, the more they promote an agrarian lifestyle.

By bringing other girls to Locust and by reconstructing her family there, Lloyd demonstrates how southern girls are the ones responsible for protecting the postbellum South and ensuring it remains a place with plantation-like landscapes. Since black girls

do not feature prominently in the series, Johnston specifically implies *white* girls have this responsibility. Though Lloyd's story begins in genteel poverty, her class mobility indicates that white girls who have left the southern aristocracy can reclaim that status. Furthermore, they should not rely on adults to regain an elite position; rather, they should initiate this move. Lloyd also demonstrates girlish power as she heals the North/South divide in her family. In doing so, *The Little Colonel* diverges from much postwar southern fiction written for adults. As Nina Silber has pointed out, many southern female characters redeem their family and their region by marrying a northerner and promoting national reconciliation (6-7). In *The Little Colonel*, however, Lloyd's parents' marriage—an adult action—distances the family, while the actions of a child brings them closer, signifying that a girl has the power to shape the future of her loved ones.

Lloyd is a different type of protector from a colonel in the military, but both of these roles depend upon spatial movement. Colonels lead soldiers into new environments in battle, while Lloyd enters a new landscape when she first walks down the avenue at Locust. Like her Confederate forbearers, she has a rebellious spirit and decides for herself what spatial boundaries will form her home. In fact, Lloyd expresses a somewhat masculine construction of protection in that she inherits her grandfather's military title and is called "The Little Colonel." In this way, Johnston shows how girls not only reconstruct plantation identities but also Confederate ones. Indeed, Anne E. Marshall notes that Johnston, like other turn-of-the-century Kentucky authors, emphasizes Kentucky as a Confederate state rather than as a border state with divided loyalties, as it was in reality (134). Though Johnson's Kentucky is undeniably southern, I would add that Johnston situates a girl as the main agent intensifying this Confederate vision,

particularly because Lloyd is the successor to her grandfather's Confederate mission. Representing this inheritance, her grandfather purchases her a Napoleon hat so she can look like a military hero. He remarks, "So little girls nowadays have taken to wearing soldier's caps, have they? It's right becoming to you with your short hair. Grandpa is real proud of his 'little Colonel'" (*Little Colonel* 134). With this hat, she does not look "fresh and dainty," as the grandfather previously preferred (*Little Colonel* 43). Rather, a soldier's hat evokes an image of battle zones where soldiers are rough, wounded, and dirty instead of "fresh." Because wearing this hat maintains a plantation past, Lloyd can acceptably cross gender boundaries and wear an emblem of masculine strength. Additionally, this mission enables her to disrupt the line between childhood and adulthood and look more like an adult male. Although her grandfather lost the Civil War, Lloyd ultimately wins her battle by reuniting her family and enabling their happiness throughout the series. In shifting the role of protector from the Old Colonel to the Little Colonel, Johnston envisions girls, rather than adult men, as more successful caretakers of southern values.

The Cabbage Patch: Urban, Working-Class Girlhood

Lloydsboro is only a short train ride away from Louisville, and Lloyd and her friends frequently make day trips into the city. In *The Little Colonel's Knight Comes Riding* (1907), Lloyd returns from one such trip with soot on her nose because "there usually is [soot] in this dirty town" (245). Louisville is not as clean as Lloyd's rural retreat; therefore, the elements of the city alter her appearance and create a dirtier experience of girlhood. Exploring this facet of girlhood in more detail, Alice Hegan Rice writes about urban domestic spaces in *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* and its sequel

Lovey Mary. Rice's books are set in a working-class section of Louisville called the Cabbage Patch, which is based on an area of Louisville of the same name. As Rice wrote in her autobiography, *The Inky Way,* Louisville "was a pleasant city, intensely southern in customs and sympathies, yet sufficiently in touch with the North to be liberal and progressive" (53). While Louisville had northern industrial features and a wider population of people than towns like Pewee Valley, Rice's books show the "intensely southern" side of the city. The Cabbage Patch adheres to the same agrarian and racial traditions that define plantation-like spaces, especially those in *The Little Colonel* series.

The Cabbage Patch was one of many slums that emerged in Louisville in the late nineteenth century. Like many southern cities, Louisville increased in population and size after the Civil War, especially as people moved to the city to work in newly built factories. With this influx of people, however, class divisions remained fairly rigid, as Louisville's spatial arrangement indicates. According to John Kleber, the wealthier homes were located in the center of the city, while working-class individuals and blacks lived in cheaper homes closer to the city's perimeter (xxi). Similar to the nucleated layout of the plantation organized around the Big House, Louisville's layout reflected a system where those living on the margins had less power and fewer material comforts. In these peripheral slums, the inhabitants lived in dirty, crowded conditions. In fact, by 1900, one-fifth of Louisville residents lived in homes with more than 11 people (Klotter 11). At the time Rice wrote her books, the Cabbage Patch held around 500-600 of these residents, many of whom worked in factories and frequented the neighborhood's saloons (Hersh 153). Though from a wealthier Louisville neighborhood, Rice was familiar with the people and conditions of the Cabbage Patch because she volunteered there from the time

she was a teenager. One woman she met there inspired the character of Mrs. Wiggs—a widowed mother of five children whose "philosophy lay in keeping the dust off her rose-colored spectacles" (*Mrs. Wiggs* 3). For Rice, writing *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* and *Lovey Mary* was an opportunity to tell an uplifting—albeit romanticized—account of the people who populated the city's marginal areas.

In both novels, Rice idealizes the Cabbage Patch through the organization of the homes. As Rice describes, "It was not a real cabbage patch, but a queer neighborhood, where ramshackle cottages played hop-scotch over the railroad tracks. There were no streets, so when a new house was built the owner faced it any way his fancy prompted" (*Mrs. Wiggs* 4-5). As this passage indicates, the Cabbage Patch does not operate by the spatial rules of a city. With homes facing a variety of directions instead of lined up in a row along a street, the Cabbage Patch is significantly less organized than neat city blocks. Without streets, there are not clear borders and passageways, which allows yards and homes to intertwine. Indeed, the children often run back and forth between Mrs. Wiggs' house and their neighbor Miss Hazy's house, linking these spaces as a community that is larger than individual dwellings. In addition, since the cottages appear to play "hop-scotch," Rice creates an image of interrelated dwellings that collectively work together to have fun. Life in Rice's Cabbage Patch focuses less on the financial burdens, health problems, and alcoholism of Louisville's actual Cabbage Patch; rather, the disorganization creates a home where children live in a game-like environment in spite of more serious concerns.

Though showing much of the Cabbage Patch through Mrs. Wiggs' "rose-colored spectacles," Rice does accurately represent the slum's rural elements. As Kleber explains,

there were dirt roads, small cottages with sheds, and flower gardens. In fact, this area acquired its name for the prevalence of farmers who grew vegetables, including cabbage (Kleber 689). Likewise, Lowell Hayes Harrison and James Klotter have found that homes in the poorer sections of Louisville resembled homes in rural areas in that both had outdoor bathrooms and no sewage disposal (229). Historians generally agree that these rural features were common in southern cities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[50] For example, southern cities had rural landscapes with gardens, unpaved and muddy streets, and an absence of electric or gas lights in outlying or poor areas. In addition, ineffective police forces contributed to a frontier-like atmosphere (Goldfield 92-94). Especially in the 1890s and early 1900s, Goldfield maintains that southern cities were "agricultural marketplaces" where urban work, such as cotton mills, supported farming (90). Through these agricultural, rural aspects of urban life, cities in the New South perpetuated an agrarian atmosphere similar to that of Old South plantations.

These agrarian features are especially apparent in Rice's representation of the Cabbage Patch. By calling the dwellings "cottages," Rice evokes a rural image that contrasts with other types of working-class urban homes, such as tenement buildings. Cottages typically exist in fresher, more natural environments—not in a dirty, fast-paced city. Rice also suggests that urban children are involved in what Goldfield calls the "agricultural marketplace" when Mrs. Wiggs' oldest son Jim takes a job with "one of the market-men…from the country" who sells crops in Louisville. Jim explains, "he ast me if I'd sleep in his wagon from three to six an' keep his vegetables from bein' stole" (18-19).

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[50] Besides David Goldfield, who is the foremost historian to make this claim, others who identify the connections between rural and urban in the South include Lawrence Larsen and Pete Daniel.

Jim's guard work enables the farmer to have a successful business and allows Louisville residents to benefit from country-grown vegetables. Consequently, this southern city and the surrounding rural areas are not separate entities but rather remain dependent on each other.

While Jim shows how boys maintain agrarian ties in public urban spaces, Rice represents girls engaging in that mission at home. The space of the home as a site with both indoor and outdoor areas enables this agrarian emphasis. When the weather is warm enough, Mrs. Wiggs' three daughters—Asia, Australia, and Europena—spend substantial time in the yard. In fact, fourteen-year-old Asia is the one who maintains the yard: she builds the "little greenhouse out of ole planks, an' kep' it full of flowers all winter (115). She also "worked diligently in her flower-bed" (128). By assigning Asia these tasks, Rice presents gardening as a feminine chore, but Asia's work is as important as the money Jim brings home. The yard provides natural beauty in a slum where houses have roofs made of tin cans (4), and it provides a nice area for her younger sisters to play and make mud-pies (128). In effect, the spatial layout of the this yard suggests that agricultural work and appearances are valuable at urban domestic sites for creating a sense of home, family, and happiness—even when siblings die or there is no money for food, both of which happen to the Wiggs family. Indeed, when the girls spend time in the yard, "Peace and harmony reigned in this shabby Garden of Eden" (128). The outdoors thus allows girls to maintain a sense of stability in difficult poverty conditions, which aligns with the agrarian tradition's view of the outdoors as an idyllic place of renewal. By depicting the outdoors though specifically girlish activities—such as pretending to cook with mud pies—Rice positions girls as the ones who ensure that agrarian lifestyles remain in an urban home.

By locating girlhood in the yard, Rice constructs urban homes that correlate with the plantation's expanded sense of domestic spaces. Instead of wealth and the ability to own large amounts of land, however, Rice suggests that the poverty conditions disrupt and extend the boundaries of individual houses. In a small cottage with shared rooms, yards enable the children to have a place of escape where they do not have to compete for space. In addition, Mrs. Wiggs puts "brown paper over the broken window-pane" (4). This paper creates a flexible barrier between the indoors and outdoors since it is significantly thinner and more permeable than the glass windows in middle- or upper-class homes. Even when the Wiggs family is inside, therefore, this type of window covering connects them more directly to the outdoors, especially in cold or rainy weather. The Wiggs girls have nowhere near as much outdoor space as Lloyd Sherman or girls who live on plantations, yet they are not entirely enclosed inside the cottage. They share this agrarian feature with southern girls living in other types of homes, which suggests that spending time outside in some sort of natural environment is an important part of southern girlhood in both urban and rural areas.

In *Lovey Mary*, the sequel to *Mrs. Wiggs and the Cabbage Patch*, Rice continues to promote the experience of girlhood afforded by the Cabbage Patch. A thirteen-year-old girl named Mary runs away from her orphanage with a young boy named Tommy and seeks refuge in the Cabbage Patch. Mary begins living with Mrs. Wiggs' neighbor Miss Hazy and her crippled nephew Chris. With this move to the Cabbage Patch, Rice decenters the middle of the city as the most important place in Louisville. When Lovey Mary leaves the orphanage, which is closer to central Louisville, and walks to the Cabbage Patch, she notices how architecture seems to imply importance: "the houses,

which a few squares back had been tall and imposing, seemed to be getting smaller and more insignificant" (35). Then, upon entering the Cabbage Patch, she arrives at the "frayed and ragged end" of the road (35). The adjectives "smaller," "frayed," and "ragged" express the Cabbage Patch's status as a marginal section of Louisville, yet Rice demonstrates how it has value in providing a new beginning for Mary—not an end. This place is where Lovey Mary finds people who love her.

Through her time in the Cabbage Patch, Lovey Mary shows that girls—not adult women—are responsible for building and maintaining the interior of urban domestic spaces. Upon arriving, she finds that Miss Hazy has let her cottage become as "frayed and ragged" as the rest of the Cabbage Patch appears (35). According to the narrator,

> The room was brimful and spilling over: trash, tin cans, and bottles overflowed the window-sills; a crippled rocking-chair, with a faded quilt over it, stood before the stove, in the open oven of which Chris' shoe was drying; an old sewing-machine stood in the middle of the floor, with Miss Hazy's sewing on one end of it and the uncleared dinner-dishes on the other. (44)

The adult fails at housekeeping, but Mary responds, "the only thing for me to do is to try to clean things up" (45). Mary then returns items to their rightful places, removes dirt, and restores organization. In doing so, she creates a healthier environment for this makeshift family where they can spend time together. With the removal of trash, they now have the room to sit in each other's company, and they can eat meals together with clean dishes. By cleaning, therefore, Mary reconstructs this home as a place where a family can develop and thrive.

Mary's cleaning also signifies that housework is the most rewarding type of labor for a southern city girl. In the early twentieth century, child labor was still prominent in cities, and Rice represents this aspect of urban life when Mary and Asia work in a factory painting tiles. Though factories and other public places employed working-class girls, historian Steven Mintz notes that most girls worked from their homes, completing paid labor such as sewing or housekeeping chores. Without servants and with adult women who may also have been working, girls of this social class were expected to help their mothers with housekeeping (141-142). Rice acknowledges this gendered concept of child labor by briefly referencing Asia and Mary's work at the factory. Instead, by underscoring the positive results of Asia's time in the yard and Mary's cleaning, Rice identifies the home—not a public workplace—as the site where girls do the most good. Like plantations and slaveholding homes, the urban cottage can also be a site for domesticity and labor, especially since Mary completes extra sewing at night to make money (171). Emphasizing this work at home also implies that the girls are more feminine, unlike Jim Wiggs whose jobs take him outside the Cabbage Patch. In this way, urban working-class girlhood aligns with the experiences of more middle-class and elite forms of southern girlhood.

Mary also creates a particularly southern home because its cleanliness and order emphasizes the racial codes of the elite, white South. As Mrs. Wiggs tells Miss Hazy, "Lovey Mary jes' took you an' the house an' ever'thing in hand, an' in four weeks got you all to livin' like *white* folks" (64, emphasis added). Although most of the actual Cabbage Patch's residents were African American or Irish and German immigrants, Rice depicts white, Caucasian characters living in this slum—including the inhabitants of Miss

Hazy's cottage (Kleber 153).[51] Yet Mrs. Wiggs' comment implies that Miss Hazy was not living by white standards because of the messiness. Similar to the Little Colonel spilling mud on the white steps, the dirt makes Miss Hazy's cottage appear black, and "Lovey Mary had made Chris carryout more n' a wheelbarrow full of dirt ever' night" (61). By eliminating black dirt and literally whitening the house, Mary aligns cleanliness and tidiness with whiteness, thus positioning the working-class home as a site that maintains white supremacist values.

By emphasizing these racial codes in a working-class home, Rice suggests racial differences define this society more than class differences. Miss Hazy's cottage is not a sprawling mansion on a plantation; however, removing dirt is one way to make these two domestic spaces more similar and operate by the same race-based protocol. This feature also connects the homes in the Cabbage Patch to those in wealthier parts of the city that are described as "white" in color. For instance, the house of the Redding family, who do philanthropic work in the Cabbage Patch in both books, is painted "white" (134). By cleaning the house and reconfiguring the space, Mary helps her makeshift family aspire to this elite status. In doing so, Mary suggests that girls ensure white supremacist values remain in homes of all social classes, which constructs an image of this southern city as a place where whiteness remains the norm. Together, the racial standards in *Lovey Mary* and the agrarian tradition in *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* construct urban, working-class southern girls as protectors of the same values that more elite girls such as Lloyd Sherman sustain.

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[51] The Wiggs children's grandfather was Native American, which makes them partially non-white, but this aspect of their heritage is not depicted as a significant part of the story or their identities. Instead, Rice, privileges their whiteness.

Back to the Cabin: Domestic Spaces for Middle-Class Black Girls

While Rice and Johnston present southern girlhood as distinctly white or white-controlled, Mary Ovington challenges that trend and provides a version of southern black girlhood that celebrates the perspectives and experiences of black girls. In the preface to *Hazel,* Ovington notes that a realistic portrayal of black children was missing from children's literature of this time period: "I have thought for some time that the colored children in the United States might also like to have their intimate books telling of happenings that were their own. They must be tired of reading always of far-away children" (v). To represent children whose experiences were not "far-away" from black child readers—especially middle-class ones who were literate and had access to books—Ovington created 11-year-old Hazel Tyler. In the nineteenth century, black writers for adults such as Frances Harper and Anna Julia Cooper began to challenge the plantation myth by drawing attention to a greater variety of southern black women. As a white woman, Ovington also participates in that trend in the early twentieth century, especially concerning the depiction of girls. Instead of being a slave or servant who obeys and entertains a white mistress or master, Hazel attends school, enjoys reading, and plays imaginative games for her own entertainment. She is as insightful and creative as Lloyd Sherman, Asia Wiggs, or Lovey Mary. Through Hazel, Ovington demonstrates how southern black girlhood is not monolithic: black girls can have a middle-class childhood.

While Hazel has middle-class experiences, her spatial mobility reveals how she still differs from white girls and presents a form of southern girlhood specific to race. Movement and spatial concerns are a significant part of Hazel's story. Though Hazel spends much of her childhood in Boston, Hazel has a southern father, and the novel

focuses on her time living on her grandmother's farm in Alabama. Although Hazel's grandmother owns her land, this farm appears like a New South plantation, especially as defined by Aiken, because of its location within a community of sharecroppers. Prominent in the late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century South, sharecropping and tenant farming were systems where farmers worked plots of land, and the landowner received a portion of the crop. At the time Ovington wrote *Hazel,* the majority of black southerners were sharecroppers.[52] These families lived in small cabins and worked plots of land ranging from 15 to 50 acres (Hurt v; Beck, Frandsen, and Randall 73). While tenant farmers were more commonly white and had some control over their equipment and crops, black sharecroppers lived in extreme poverty and debt and were subject to the white, male property owner who regulated living expenses and basic necessities, such as food or clothing for their children. Farmers like Hazel's grandmother, who owned their own property, still depended on community buildings to process crops; therefore, they experienced parts of the nuclear sharecropping network even if they were not technically beholden to a white landowner. In this way, black rural southerners had a difficult time escaping nineteenth-century social structures.

In *Hazel*, Ovington represents the spatial arrangement of these New South plantations. When Hazel stands by her grandmother's cabin, she notices the dispersed pattern of the surrounding cabins: "the landscape dipped at the back of the cabin, and Hazel looked over fields of corn and stubble and dry cotton stalks. A number of cabins were dotted about among the fields" (57). On these individual farms, the inhabitants can

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[52] According to R. Douglas Hurt, 83% of African Americans lived in the rural South at the turn of the century. Of that proportion, 75% of black farmers were tenant farmers, most of whom were sharecroppers (v).

gain a sense of privacy and personal space, yet these farms still operate as part of one plantation network. Indeed, Ovington refers to them collectively as "a number of cabins" (57). These farms are small enough that Hazel can observe multiple ones at the same time from standing in one spot in Granny's yard, which further expresses a sense of unity. Although Granny is a landowner, her cabin still belongs to this landscape. Ovington connects all of "the fields" as one group by not describing individual property lines between the fields of various farms. In travelling South, therefore, Hazel returns to a plantation environment.

In addition, these farms operate in a way that retains plantation management styles and work relations. Hazel's neighbors, especially her friend Scipio's family, live under the authority of Ward, who Granny calls "the master" (92). Ward "owns the land and the store and the seed and the mules and the cows and the calves" (93). Similar to an antebellum plantation owner, Ward controls the agricultural production and the daily lives of the sharecroppers, especially through doling out goods at the store. As a result, Granny remarks, "Every year it's just the same. Slave, slave and not a thing to show for it" (92). By pointing out how Granny's community operates by a system akin to slavery, Ovington identifies how race-based social structures dominated the rural South 50 years after emancipation. The term "slave" also underscores a sense of unfairness that these conditions perpetuate. Providing a perspective where black characters are unhappy with their slave-like status is unique for children's literature of this time period, and Ovington shows how these black characters are powerless to change their status. As one who owns her farm, Granny is not beholden to Ward, indicating that an elderly black woman can become more than a mammy; however, she still lives within a white-controlled labor

structure in that she also washes laundry for the nearby white community. Through Granny's portrayal as a laundress/farmer, Ovington still presents domestic or agricultural labor as the only work available for blacks in the rural South. In this book, the black middle-class professionals, such as lawyers, ministers, and teachers, live in the North. This representation suggests that if girls like Hazel aspire to a life different from the work slaves completed, then they cannot stay in the South permanently. In this region, the domestic and agricultural labor keeps blacks trapped in Old South customs, even within emerging New South structures.

This Old South environment is the one Hazel's mother thinks will benefit her, which seems surprising considering that large numbers of African Americans left this landscape in the early twentieth century. Between 1910-1930, more than 1.5 million African Americans moved from the rural South to northern cities, seeking better employment opportunities and living conditions (Hurt 2). In fact, some literature for black children of this era encourages this move, most notably the children's editions of *The Crisis*, the NAACP magazine edited by W. E. B. Du Bois.[53] In an issue that also advertises *Hazel,* Du Bois tells his readers to "get out of the South as soon as possible" (270). In contrast, Hazel must leave the North as soon as possible because the cold climate is making her ill and naughty. As her mother's friend comments, "a winter in the South will mean health for her" (Ovington 28). Hazel not only recovers her physical

[53] Not all books for black children encourage them to permanently leave the South. Lesser known than *The Crisis,* the conduct manual *Floyd's Flowers*, written by a black man from Georgia named Silas Floyd, contains a few stories about black children living in the South. In "Thanksgiving at Piney Grove," a girl from a rural community goes to a nearby city to attend school and then returns to teach where she grew up. Together, *Floyd's Flowers* and *Hazel* suggest that some black and white writers saw the South as a beneficial location for black children.

health but also her emotional health. Hazel's father had left the South before she was born, but by going to live with her grandmother for several months, Hazel re-forges both the family connection and her identity as a southerner. By meeting a grandmother she had never met before, Hazel reconstructs her family, indicating that the southern members of regionally divided families are still significant. Ovington thereby shows black middle-class readers, especially those in the North who may still have family in the South, that an association between black girlhood and the South can be advantageous.

The South is particularly beneficial, as Ovington demonstrates, because of the specific domestic space of the cabin. Even though *Hazel* is a progressive book for this time period, the promotion of Granny's cabin illustrates its status as a transitional text that also depicts characters in stereotypical landscapes. Granny's cabin is more similar to the slave quarters on a plantation than Hazel's apartment in Boston. Historians generally agree that most slave cabins were one or two rooms.[54] As John Vlach has found, most of these dwellings held one room made of wood with a fireplace at one end (155). This structure matches the description of Granny's cabin where "the walls were of wood" (Ovington 56). Granny's residence contains two rooms, one of which is a small bedroom for Hazel, but in the main room, "Granny's big bed was at one end, and the fire-place at the other" (51). In this small domain, kitchen, bedroom, and living area exist in the same space, unlike the Boston apartment that has three rooms, including a separate kitchen and

[54] Historians who report on this feature of slave cabins include Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, John Vlach, and Charles Aiken. In addition, historians focusing on specific regions with different types of plantations, such as Wilma Dunaway's study of Appalachia and Charles Joyner's study of South Carolina, have found that cabins were either one or two rooms. Joyner adds that some slave dwellings were a "double pen" with two one-room cabins sharing a wall with a central chimney (119). Even with buildings containing two rooms, there were not rooms with individual purposes, such as a separate kitchen and bedroom.

parlor (51). In addition, Granny's cabin has no running water or electricity (49, 67). Instead of illustrating poverty, however, these features are an asset: the natural light from the fireplace "sent forth a rich, yellow flame" (49). Here, Ovington presents the cabin as welcoming. This fire is pleasant to watch, and it provides warmth for a girl who is ill, which represents this cabin as a safe place for Hazel to recover from the ailments she acquired in the North. Through the imagery of the fire, Ovington suggests that the cramped, rudimentary features of a small cabin provide a favorable home for girls.

Granny's cabin is also warm in a more figurative sense in that Hazel and her grandmother strengthen their family bond. At this time, the spatial features of tenant farms helped black families to maintain a sense of kinship and unity. Historians such as Edward Royce, Joseph Reidy, and Michael Fitzgerald have found that post-Civil War plantation structures enabled black laborers to shift from gang labor to what Fitzgerald calls "family-based tenant farming" (61). On more individualized farms, the inhabitants could manage the farm as a family unit and decide among themselves which member would complete certain tasks. For instance, the father could work in the fields, while the mother could stay home to care for the children and maintain the cabin, if conditions permitted them to not work in the fields (Reidy 155). Representing these possibilities, Granny has the freedom to determine Hazel's daily activities and Hazel has the opportunity to enjoy them. She tells Hazel when to go outside and play, when to help her with chores, and how to complete those chores. In short, this home allows Granny to be a parent and Hazel to be a child, according to more middle-class perceptions of those roles. Moreover, on these farms, black families no longer live in fear of separation as they did during slavery. Granny, for instance, was born a slave and never knew her mother. As she

tells Hazel, "there's thousands like that" (126). On the farm, however, Granny and Hazel have control over their family structure.

The idea of home on Granny's farm, however, differs from the perceptions of home that Hazel encounters in the North. In fact, one of the reasons Hazel's mother sends her to Alabama is so she can experience the features of a southern home. As Mrs. Tyler comments, "it's a home in a beautiful place where she could be out-of-doors all day long. My husband used to tell me about the good times he had as a boy among the pines with plenty of space around him. He, like Hazel, would have hated to have been shut up in three rooms" (25). Here, Mrs. Tyler identifies a main difference between domestic sites in northern cities and the rural South: home in Boston means the three-room apartment, while home in Alabama means "plenty of space" outside. Granny's home, therefore, is southern—and southern in a way that recalls the plantation South—because it encompasses both inside and outside areas, similar to the homes in the Cabbage Patch and Locust. Furthermore, Mrs. Tyler implies that southern homes benefit girls because they can spend the majority of their time outside. Like her father, Hazel now spends every afternoon playing in the pine woods with her friend Scipio. By living so close to a natural environment, Hazel experiences a more agrarian form of home that produces a distinctly southern experience of girlhood.

An association with the outdoors was common in depictions of black southern girlhood in children's literature and culture of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most often, black girls appeared as the pickaninny figure, such as May Lilly in *The Little Colonel* or Topsy in versions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Though not always a girl, the pickaninny was a black child represented in outdoor landscapes, often appearing

comical or wearing ragged clothes. Such images dehumanized the black child, as Robin Bernstein has argued, by suggesting they did not feel pain and excluding them from the category of childhood (20, 34). This pickaninny image was also prevalent in turn-of-the-century culture, such as the "Pickaninny Sextette" in Figure 8. Produced and used by whites, this postcard belonged to a series depicting rural black life in South Georgia. The "Pickaninny Sextette" represents this figure's association with poverty and rural life. These children wear dirty, stained clothing, implying a lack of parental care. They are posed in front of a cabin, which also seems unclean with debris littering the floor near the door. Furthermore, their similar postures and facial expressions dehumanizes them by suggesting they are all alike instead of unique individuals. For the younger ones, it is not entirely clear if they are boys or girls. Here, the children are associated with the area outside the cabin, but they do not play or bond with family members like Hazel. Instead, their static pose suggests that they are only capable of taking up space. For the pickaninny figure, the outdoors is not a place of personal growth, active behaviors, or gender specific experiences.

Figure 8. "Pickaninny Sextette in Cotton Belt along A. B. & A. R. R." The Atlanta, Birmingham, and Atlantic Railroad printed this postcard sometime between 1906 and 1915. Privately owned by Laura Hakala.

The "Pickaninny Sextette" postcard emphasizes how Hazel deviates from the pickaninny figure and shows a more renewing and middle-class version of black agrarian girlhood. When playing outside, Hazel and her friend Scipio are not passive, but they actively engage nature: they pretend an open area between the trees is a parlor in an imaginary house. She "made it look like a dwelling place, bringing two boxes for seats and a third for a table" (94). In doing so, Ovington uses the outdoors to emphasize Hazel's childlike attributes and her femininity. Rather than merely existing in the outdoors or using it for work-related purposes, Hazel repurposes the outdoors for her own amusement and shows a propensity for imaginative play. She also domesticates the wildness of the woods by constructing this home and family with Scipio as her imaginary brother. Through creating domestic space, she adheres to more gender-specific forms of (white) girlhood that associate femininity and the home. Challenging the gender blurring of the pickaninny figure, Hazel completes housekeeping chores: "she tidied her pine-needle carpet" (95). This representation seems particularly appropriate for Ovington's black child readers who were trying to follow middle-class standards of gender and domesticity, especially in northern cities. Through Hazel, Ovington provides a model of a girl who represents those standards without being associated with more stereotypical forms of outdoor activity for black girls, such as working or helplessly sitting in a yard like the "Pickaninny Sextette." Instead, Ovington suggests that black girls can experience more healthy forms of agrarian girlhood through gender-specific imaginative play in the woods. Because of her outdoor mobility, "she was in much better health than when she

had come to Alabama" (100). Through active play, Hazel shows how southern black girls can be rural but still fulfill middle-class conceptions of childhood.

Though using Hazel to deviate from representations of southern black girls, Ovington still shows how the plantation-like cabin forces Hazel to relinquish some play time and work more than she did in the North. For example, she completes many household chores, such as gathering eggs, spinning thread, and washing the dishes (64). Such chores were common for slave girls, according to Wilma King (28-29), and a heavy reliance on child labor indicates one way sharecropping communities replicated plantation experiences. In sharecropping homes, as Tolnay has found, black child labor was essential for the survival of the families (39). Though not sharecropping, Hazel operates under similar conditions in that her chores ensure her family has food to eat and a clean environment in which to live. This work moves Hazel away from middle-class conceptions of childhood as a protected time to grow and learn. At the cabin, Hazel no longer engages in the "regular hours for school and play and home-work" that characterized her life in Boston (58). Since she goes to the yard to gather eggs, Ovington indicates that the outdoors is not only a place for leisure activities, but it is a site for work, as it was for slave girls living on plantations. Hazel now does this domestic work for her own benefit, and it supports her family instead of a white master's family; however, Ovington also suggests that these domestic chores are enjoyable. In fact, Hazel "grew so interested" in spinning that "Granny sometimes had to send her away to play" (64). Though Hazel's father created a life in Boston where Hazel would not have to work as her slave ancestors did, Ovington suggests that Hazel prefers work to play. As a result, Ovington constructs an image of black southern girlhood defined by agricultural and

domestic labor, which correlates with depictions of slave girls in abolitionist literature and postbellum plantation fiction.

Ovington also indicates that black southern girls cannot escape the race-based protocol of southern homes. One day, she wanders into a nearby community where poor white individuals live. This place looks identical to the sharecropper community: "There were the same log cabins, the same stretches of land filled with dry cotton stalks, the same hens, the same hogs" (101). Nevertheless, Hazel realizes that when she crosses into an area where individuals of another race live, black people must behave a certain way, especially inside the homes of white people. Initially, Hazel follows the protocol of the North: she knocks on the front door of a house to ask for directions back to her grandmother's cabin (103). As a result of this action, the women who own the home criticize her, and she exits the home differently: "in proper southern fashion the little colored girl went out the back door" (110). Although the status and lifestyle of this home appears similar to Hazel's, the entry and exit procedures imply that Hazel is inferior to these white individuals. Moreover, by using the back door, black people may not be seen by other neighbors, which conceals their movement into the home and maintains the illusion that it is solely a white space. Exiting by the back door forces Hazel into a racist hierarchy that elevates whiteness over blackness. Living during segregation, Hazel is drawn into a system where southerners are separate and, as a result, distinctly unequal.

As with Rice's representation of Miss Hazy's clean cottage in the Cabbage Patch, Ovington positions the home and the way individuals use their homes as a central apparatus for constructing whiteness and blackness. Because Hazel's cabin and the white cabins look alike on the outside, Ovington demonstrates the fragile line between these

racial boundaries and how they are, indeed, social constructs. As sharecroppers and tenant farmers, poor blacks and poor whites have an almost identical home and lifestyle. Since appearances were often deceptive during this era, the white South relied on what Jennifer Ritterhouse calls "racial etiquette" to differentiate between white and black. According to Ritterhouse, racial etiquette involved "the unwritten rules that governed day-to-day interactions across race lines not only as a form of social control but also as a script for the performative creation of culture and of 'race' itself" (4). In Hazel's case, the entrance and exit etiquette construct homes as white or black. In this white home, the protocols for movement signifies that whiteness means control over domestic spaces, while blackness means submitting to the rules created by whites. Hazel, therefore, is reinstated into a protocol that defined southern homes throughout the nineteenth century. Hazel can ride a train from one region to another, run through the woods, and walk through neighboring communities; however, this racial etiquette limits her spatial movement, forming intangible walls that are more confining than the walls of any building or train compartment she enters.

Though Ovington reconfigures much of the plantation stereotype for girls, she also emphasizes how southern domestic spaces still provide some experiences similar to plantation girlhood. Hazel gains more time to spend outside, but she abandons her leisure-filled northern childhood for days split between work and play. In addition, she learns to abide by the racial protocol of the plantation network, submitting to the white citizens and knowing that she must behave differently in black homes and white homes. Though Ovington recognizes racial inequality in the South, she still suggests that black girls have a difficult time escaping subordinate positions there. In fact, when Hazel

returns to Boston by train, she must pretend to be a maid to her white travelling companion, so she can move freely throughout the segregated train. She will "make a game of it, because it is better to do that than to keep feeling angry" (154). By acknowledging that Hazel could feel "angry," Ovington is critical of segregation and indicates black children do not have to feel happy about racism. In this moment, Ovington calls attention to racial injustice in ways that most abolitionist, Confederate, postbellum plantation, and family stories do not. Fictional black girls, from Topsy to May Lilly, are generally depicted as happy with their inferior treatment and their relegation to non-white spaces. Therefore, Hazel's anger underscores how previous depictions of southern black girls in children's literature are fantasies intended to preserve white supremacy.

However, Hazel has no choice but to accept that system and return to the character type most common in racist depictions of black girls in nineteenth- and early-twentieth century children's literature. As a maid mixing work and play, Hazel aligns with many other black girls on plantations, from Tidy to Drusilla to May Lilly. Even if it is a coping strategy, Ovington implies that black girlhood entails serving white people. Like the unnamed black girl in the *Confederate Veteran* picture, Hazel returns to a plantation-like experience in a space removed from the plantation. Most of Hazel's experiences in the South suggest that middle-class black girls cannot progress beyond these stereotypes without some restraint. Because southern domestic settings such as New South plantations, homes, and the living quarters on trains are governed by white supremacist protocols, Hazel remains trapped in a system where her race limits her

movement. If black girls want to embrace their southern heritage, then they have no choice but to preserve some aspects of plantation life.

Southern Moral Guides

When Hazel's experiences are considered alongside the Little Colonel and the girls in the Cabbage Patch, we can see that children's authors do not construct a monolithic image of southern girlhood. Forms vary according to specific sub-region, family life, and daily activities such as work or school. Yet in spite of racial and class differences, patterns emerge among these young female characters because they live in southern domestic environments. In these family stories, race determines how girls use these areas, and the concept of home spreads beyond the walls of the house to promote an agrarian agenda. Celebrating and enacting these agrarian and racial codes would not have been possible for Lloyd in New York or Hazel in Boston. Southern girlhood varies, but these girls are all a product of regional domestic spaces shaping their southern identities.

In the books by Johnston, Rice, and Ovington, homes make girls embrace codes that defined plantation life. Though the domestic spaces constructed by these authors are not plantations, they have similar spatial features, and they operate by similar protocols—even in *Hazel*, a book that contests some aspects of the plantation tradition. *Hazel* especially implies that these plantation codes are so ingrained in the lifestyles and the homes of southerners that they linger beyond the lifespan of the plantation. Moreover, Johnston, Rice, and Ovington show how the plantation extends beyond the spatial confines of actual plantations, impacting the configuration of an estate in town, an urban slum, and a farm owned by an emancipated woman. In other words, as the New South

emerges, the plantation and its protocols morph into new forms that outlast the society that first created them.

These spatial features also illustrate how Johnston, Rice, and Ovington repurpose girl characters and their roles in families according to patterns in the family stories genre. In these books, girls typically function as redeemers who, as Gail Schmunk Murray notes, act as "the catalyst for remarkable character improvement for some or all of those with whom she came in contact" (55). Johnston, Rice, and Ovington depict southern girls as redeemers; however, these characters guide their families toward a specifically southern—and white in the case of Lloyd and Lovey Mary—sense of redemption. In short, these families are only whole and happy when girls can help them reconnect with the racial and agrarian values that contributed to plantation life. Lloyd Sherman, for instance, unites her estranged family, so they can live peacefully with slave-like workers at Locust. The Wiggs girls help their family to have agrarian experiences in the yard, while Lovey Mary creates a race-based domestic space for her family to enjoy. Finally, Hazel shows her northern mother that segregated spaces and agrarian behaviors are beneficial because she returns to Boston happier, healthier, and better behaved than when she left. Like typical family stories, these southern girls have the power to help their families change, but they are directing their families towards the same lifestyles that contributed to the enslavement of thousands of people. These southern girls create a particularly distorted version of family redemption, one that is largely defined by white perspectives and experiences.

In this way, these fictional southern girls remake the Old South for their families but also for the imaginations of child readers, both white and black. The girl characters

are not only preserving white supremacist and agrarian values, but the texts are also performing that work of preservation for girl readers. As Johnston, Rice, and Ovington suggest, girls can remake the plantation because of their future potential as mothers who can raise children to adopt these values—as, for instance, the Confederate girls were valued—but for their current potential as daughters. In these families, the daughters are the most influential members, which challenges adult/child hierarchies. Mildred Lewis Rutherford and the Daughters of the Confederacy organization emphasize the important role of the daughter in protecting antebellum traditions throughout the 1890s and early twentieth century; however, examining these children's books through a spatial and historical lens shows how *child* daughters, as opposed to *adult* daughters, are more effective in remaking the plantation. Their youth allows them to use play as a tool of preservation and enter spaces adults do not, while their femininity gives them power in the home. Combining these features, these fictional girls reorganize their families and privilege children as powerful members of southern society. Yet even though these girls have certain types of mobility, they construct southern girlhood as an experience trapped within plantation identities.

CHAPTER VI

CODA: THE BOUNDARIES OF REGIONAL GIRLHOOD AND EARLY-TWENTIETH-CENTURY SERIES BOOKS

In the early twentieth century, southern girls had a range of ways to experience distinct regional identities: the Carr-Burdette Rifles practiced their Confederate drills; the Children of the Confederacy decorated veterans' graves; girls read about the lost cause in the popular Elsie Dinsmore books and Little Colonel series; and many daughters of sharecroppers picked cotton in fields where their ancestors were slaves. However, at this same time, some southern girls had opportunities to experience a more national form of girlhood. For example, the first 18 girls to register as Girl Scouts were southerners living in Savannah, Georgia. In 1912, founder Juliette Gordon Low initiated the Girl Scouts by calling a friend and announcing, "I've got something for the girls of Savannah and all America and all the world, and we're going to start it tonight!" (qtd. in Shultz and Lawrence 305). Although the first troop was only available to white girls and not *all* those in Savannah, Low's plan expresses a more outward perspective on southern girlhood, indicating an experience that starts regionally is not necessarily confined there.[55] Instead, it can spread to a national or global level, as the Girl Scouts ultimately did. Reflecting this national focus, the first handbook for the Girl Scouts was called *How Girls Can Help Their Country* (1913). Similar to the Carr-Burdette Rifles, the first troops in Savannah practiced marching like a military regiment (Shultz and Lawrence 321);

[55] Nationally, the Girl Scouts made efforts to involve girls from different racial backgrounds, although troops were initially segregated. The first African American Girl Scout troop formed in 1917 in New York, and the first Native American troop began in 1921. However, the first southern African American troop did not exist until the late 1930s, which indicates that southerners tried to maintain racially distinct experiences of girlhood longer than other regions (Taylor).

however, they engaged in this typically adult, masculine activity to "help their country"—not their region.

Considering groups like the Girl Scouts alongside the Carr-Burdette Rifles provides insight into a tension that appears in early-twentieth-century children's literature and culture: southern definitions of girlhood conflict with more national definitions. Girls' series books best express this tension, primarily because this type of literature contains more southern girls than other types of children's books written during this time period. Southern girls appear more often in series fiction because of the extreme popularity of this type of literature in the early twentieth century. In fact, Sherrie Inness labels 1900-1930 the "golden age of series books" (5). Better printing methods, along with ghostwriters organized by groups such as the Stratemeyer Syndicate, led to an increase in production (5). In fact, between 1910-1920, approximately 94 girls' series were in production (Axe 12). Marketed mainly to white girls, these series spanned numerous genres, including detective, school, and adventure stories. While girls' series fiction existed in the nineteenth century, the turn-of-the-century books became more formulaic. As Inness explains, girl protagonists do not age over the course of the series, are not as complex, experience "exciting adventure," and are often more intelligent and skilled than girls in reality (2-3). As these characters became more uniform, regional distinctiveness diminished. The Elsie Dinsmore and Little Colonel books published during these years are two notable exceptions to this uniformity. Probably because these series began in the nineteenth century, they continue patterns of nineteenth-century southern girlhood involving agrarian and racial constructs. However, most girls' series that started in the early twentieth century alter or disrupt these tropes, primarily as these

young female characters move to different locations and interact with characters from other regions more often.

This coda therefore suggests that representations of southern girlhood began to shift in the early twentieth century. More specifically, authors depict southern girls who question the regional identities common to earlier children's literature. Three books, in particular, best illustrate this trend and are counter-examples to the books examined in Chapters II through V: *The Blossom Shop: A Story of the South* (1913) by Isla May Mullins, *Madge Morton: Captain of the Merry Maid* (1914) by Amy D.V. Chalmers, and *Ruth Fielding Down in Dixie or Great Times in the Land of Cotton* (1916) by Alice B. Emerson. These three books demonstrate how early-twentieth-century girls' series fiction conceives of domestic space differently from the representations of home in the books examined in the previous chapters. All three series are set in the early twentieth century, and they correlate with this time period's expansion of legalized segregation, especially through the depiction of spatial layouts and domestic protocols. As a result, girls do not demonstrate the same features of southern girls in abolitionist books, Confederate literature, postbellum plantation novels, and family stories. As southern girls experience less interracial companionship, they appear more similar to girls from other regions. Examining how southern girlhood becomes less distinct in these books, I maintain that early-twentieth-century series fiction expresses a tension between national and regional definitions of girlhood. This tension, ultimately, provides insight into literary constructions of southern girlhood between 1852 and1920 as an experience bounded by place, space, and race.

Girls' series fiction in the first two decades of the twentieth century attempted to show girl readers their opportunities in a new century. Writers expressed the many ways girls could be powerful and progressive by travelling on adventures, solving mysteries, going to college, or contributing to World War I. Although this type of literature has historically been denigrated as popular fiction, scholars such as Carolyn Carpan, Sherrie Inness, and Emily Hamilton-Honey have recently argued that these books are worthy of serious literary consideration because they participate in cultural ideologies about girlhood. For instance, Hamilton-Honey asserts that the Ruth Fielding series illustrates girls' roles as economic consumers and producers (21, 202).[56] While the Ruth Fielding series has received critical attention, scholarship on The Blossom Shop series and the Madge Morton series is significantly scarcer. My focus on southern girlhood connects these three series, demonstrating how series fiction allows us to think about girls and their relationship to both regional and national identities in the early twentieth century. These three series presented girl readers with a world where southern girls are not bound to the domestic protocols and spaces of the nineteenth-century past. However, the books also showed this national version of girlhood as an opportunity for white girls, since the girl characters are primarily white and white writers and publishers produced the books for white readers. Although writers reconceptualize southern girlhood as more nationally oriented, they still construct it as a race-based category.

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[56] While Hamilton-Honey primarily addresses later books in the series where Ruth works in the film industry, I focus on an earlier book before Ruth advances her career. Although children's writers have shown southern girls' involvement in the economy, such as Elsie Dinsmore's plantation management, *Ruth Fielding Down in Dixie* does not suggest that southern girls make major contributions to the economy. This depiction may result from the fact that Nettie—the one southern girl in *Ruth Fielding*—inherits wealth, unlike Ruth who is middle class and makes more economic decisions.

These racial lines become particularly apparent when placing series fiction in relation to what Grace Elizabeth Hale terms the "culture of segregation" that was prevalent in the South in the early twentieth century (92). Segregation was used not only to enforce physical separation in public areas, transportation networks, churches, and schools, but also to construct whiteness and blackness as different. As historian Jennifer Ritterhouse has found, white and black southern children spent less time together as the twentieth century progressed (182). They still played together, especially at young ages, but white and black children attended different schools and no longer shared living quarters. On family-managed tenant farms, black girls did not work by playing with their owner's white daughters as slaves did; rather they worked on their family's farm, which kept them more separated from white girls. As they aged, southern girls experienced more segregated spaces during adolescence, which is the main age represented in girls' series fiction. Indeed, this time period saw the rise of a distinct youth culture and the concept of adolescence as a stage of development, yet white and black southerners experienced adolescence in different spaces, as opposed to nineteenth-century youth who shared spaces but experienced those spaces differently. For instance, the majority of black southern adolescents worked, which took them to places where middle- and upper-class white southern adolescents did not spend as much time, such as fields or shops.[57] In addition, social activities were kept separate, and as Ritterhouse notes, many white adolescent girls were told not to associate with black individuals (183). Such divisions

[57] According to census data from 1910 compiled by Stewart Tolnay, the percent of black southern girls between the ages of 15-18 who held jobs is substantially higher than white southern girls between 15-18. For those whose families owned their property, 60.7 percent of black girls reported an occupation, while only 22.2 percent of white girls worked. For those families who rented, 74 percent of black girls worked, compared to 32 percent of white girls (46).

ultimately perpetuated a white supremacist system where ones' race designated the space he or she inhabited.

Institutional segregation also impacted southern homes. During the 1890s and early-twentieth-century, Hale argues that many southern homes changed from plantation households populated by large numbers of black and white residents to more middle-class and northern definitions of home, especially as people moved to towns and cities. Unlike plantations, where the slaveholding household was the work domain of the male planter, the new South home became more female-centered, and it functioned more like a private refuge separate from the economic marketplace (93). However, these homes remained distinctly southern through the use of black domestic workers. As Hale notes, this type of home "remained a space of integration within an increasingly segregated world" (94). The white home was integrated in comparison to more public spaces, yet it was still a place of racial discrimination. It led white southern children to grow up in an environment where they practiced racist protocols on an everyday basis. Retaining jobs similar to those during slavery, black women worked in white homes cooking, washing laundry, cleaning, and caring for children. Black girls held the same jobs, and domestic work was the most common job for black girls during this time period (Ritterhouse 185, 196). Differing from slavery, though, the majority of black domestic workers in the early twentieth century did not live in the white homes where they were employed. According to Micki McElya, these women lived in their own homes, and they demanded set hours and wages to emphasize their status as employee instead of servant or slave, although such recognition was typically difficult to achieve (208). Nevertheless, this separation disrupted the idea of the southern home as a place for interracial family units. The

southern home, therefore, became a space to negotiate the conventions of segregation, which suggests why girls' series fiction set in southern homes seems to question some racist trends *and* reinforce white supremacist views.

The Blossom Shop's Segregated Home

One of the larger goals of this project has been to show how fictional southern girls are constructed as protectors of the South through the domestic spaces in which they live. In early-twentieth-century series fiction, the home does not direct girls towards these same identities because the home changes as it becomes more segregated. Mullins' *The Blossom Shop: A Story of the South* (1913) illustrates these differences by suggesting that segregation decreases the amount of work completed by black laborers. Mullins, the wife of a prominent Southern Baptist minister named Edgar Young Mullins, wrote a four-part series that centers around a family's business sending flowers to northerners, which they operate from their home. *The Blossom Shop* is the series' first installment. In this book, an eight-year-old girl named Gene Grey is cured of blindness and lives with her mother in a small Alabama town. The rest of the series shows Mrs. Grey marrying a neighboring widower named Carter, Gene growing up with her two stepsisters, and the girls going to college and marrying.

The family business, called the Blossom Shop, complicates the slaveholding concept of home as a site for both domesticity and economic production. Mullins represents the early-twentieth-century trend for white homes still to rely on black labor. The family has an "old-colored manservant" named Uncle Sam who lives "in the yard," and he occasionally helps collect flowers and drives Gene and her mother places (27). However, the white characters complete the majority of the work by preparing the

flowers, mailing them, and arranging for northern business contacts. Because of their middle-class status, especially in the first book when Gene and her mother need money to cure her blindness, this family relies on white girls to take active roles in the business. For example, Gene goes with her mother into the woods, and "they gathered beautiful, graceful sprays in armfuls and piled them into the surrey" (69). Uncle Sam accompanies them, but they collect flowers alongside him instead of only supervising him. Gene's participation in the Blossom Shop does not negate the racist servitude forced upon Uncle Sam, but it does elucidate how white southern girls from earlier children's texts experience a different form of work in their households, especially the slaveholding ones. For instance, a girl like Elsie Dinsmore has an active role in managing her plantation, but that job is only possible if there are slaves to manage. A girl like Gene, however, does not need black characters to do her work; she can do it with or without Uncle Sam. Gene makes white southern girlhood appear less reliant on black labor, and this contrast emphasizes how earlier texts construct white southern girlhood as an experience dependent upon white society's definition of blackness as servitude.

As Uncle Sam demonstrates, the home in *The Blossom Shop* remains what Hale calls "a space of integration" in a segregated society (94), yet Mullins redistributes how characters use those integrated spaces, suggesting white southerners should be less reliant on protocols of black servitude. This shift in protocol directly affects white girlhood and childrearing methods for white girls. The neighbors and friends of the Greys, The Carter family, have two young girls named Hannie and May, who are served by Mammy Sue. The narrator explains that these girls need to depend less on Mammy Sue because she

> had been trained in the affluence of ante-bellum days and now disdained economy. His [Mr. Carter's] motherless little girls were not being reared to meet the necessities of the *new south*. They never dressed themselves or cared for their clothes, and when Mr. Carter suggested that they should be taught these things, and to sew as well, Mammy Sue's nose went high in the air….So Mr. Carter had to see his children being poorly prepared for their probable future. (62-63, emphasis mine)

Mullins recognizes that these middle-class southerners cannot operate by the same standards as the white antebellum aristocracy: they do not have the money or the large number of slaves to maintain "affluent" lifestyles. Mammy Sue represents the old South, but in the "new south," white girls should take more responsibility for tasks that slaves once completed, such as maintaining their clothes and sewing. A reliance on antebellum domestic relationships also hinders the girls' self-sufficiency and their ability to learn how to manage a household, both of which are essential for their "probable future" as wives and mothers in the twentieth century. While this passage might appear to dismantle racist domestic hierarchies, it only reorganizes them. Mr. Carter does not want to remove Mammy Sue entirely; he merely wants to decrease her interactions with the girls. In short, Mullins expresses how "new south" girls need to share fewer experiences and thus less space with their mammies.

Mullins' representation of racial protocol participates in the "culture of segregation" that Hale notes is prominent during this time period (92). With Mammy Sue caring for the Carter girls, Mullins portrays the type of southern home where girls learn that individuals from opposite races serve different societal roles; however, Mullins

emphasizes how domestic space needs to be less integrated and more segregated. With this new procedure, the girls and Mammy Sue will spend less time together in the house. If the girls dress themselves, Mammy Sue does not need to sleep in the girls' bedroom to be there when they go to bed and wake up in the morning. The second book, *Anne of the Blossom Shop, Or, the Growing Up of Anne Carter* (1914), emphasizes these segregated living quarters. By this point in the story, the widowed Mrs. Grey has married Mr. Carter, and Hannie wants to be called the more mature-sounding Anne. Mammy Sue has slept in a cabin in the yard since "the new regime was inaugurated with the children, which forbade Mammy Sue's sleeping longer on the floor in the room with either Anne or May" (56). Mammy Sue's move to the yard places her in a location common to nineteenth-century southern housing layouts, which still signifies her subordinate status in this household, yet, like many black domestic laborers at this time, Mammy Sue seems less like a slave and more like an employee when she inhabits living quarters outside of the white residency. Integration, therefore, is no longer the method by which girls protect white southern views of race.

Mammy Sue's move from the bedroom to the cabin represents how changing racial protocols reconstruct southern girlhood. House slaves, for instance, often slept on the floor near their masters or mistresses, as described in works such as *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs and *Reminisces of Georgia* by Emily Burke. Even in the late nineteenth century, Ellen Glasgow recalls how she and her mammy slept in the same room because "we were never apart" (19). Likewise, this move disrupts a trend in children's literature: Popsy sleeps on the floor beside her mistress in *Miss Li'l' Tweetty;* Drusilla does the same with Sweetest Susan in *Little Mr. Thimblefinger*; and the adult

mammies live in the white children's nursery in *Step by Step: Tidy's Way to Freedom*, the Elsie Dinsmore series, and *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot.* By reorganizing sleeping arrangements, Mullins' books identify a distinctive aspect of southern girlhood in the nineteenth century: integrated spaces characterize white and black southern girlhood in the majority of books examined in this dissertation, and integration is a method for girls to protect white supremacist protocols. In shared spaces, fictional girls exercise their prescribed roles in a racist system and demonstrate the importance of adhering to those roles. Yet when Mullins separates the Carter girls from their mammy, The Blossom Shop series gives white girls less space and less opportunity to protect racist hierarchies. White southern girlhood is now more independent, rather than dependent on black labor. As a result, southern girlhood starts to seem less regional. The Carter girls must care for their daily personal tasks in the same way as girls in other regions who do not have mammies.

When The Blossom Shop series deemphasizes the mammy/child relationship, the books show another effect of the segregated home: a closer bond between white girls and their mothers. The former Mrs. Grey and now remarried Mrs. Carter is the perfect alternative to Mammy Sue because she "could train them [the girls] with consummate womanly skill and… reconstruct Mammy Sue's views of life" (*Blossom* 63). By the second book in the series, Mrs. Carter now instructs the girls in household chores such as cleaning rooms and in personal care such as brushing their hair. Consequently, the narrator notes, "things had gradually fallen into smoother grooves in the little Southern household under the spell of two very potent qualities which Mrs. Carter possessed, poise and charm" (*Anne* 57). This new South home becomes more like a northern female-oriented space, but it becomes centered in specifically white adult femininity.

This focus calls attention to two central patterns in earlier children's texts: a lack of white mother/daughter bonds and girls impacting the home more than adult women. In each type of children's literature examined in this dissertation, mammies—both adult and child—serve as mother figures to white girls, interacting with white girls more than their biological mothers do. This relationship centralizes white girls as the primary protectors of racial hierarchies in their households. According to the protocols of slaveholding homes, white girls remain in control of their mammies, even if their mammies are older and more knowledgeable than they. Fictional southern girls, therefore, demonstrate how age does not designate authority in the antebellum and postwar South; rather, race identifies positions of power. Through this position of power, white girls disrupt the line between adulthood and childhood—a disruption that makes southern constructions of girlhood unique. However, with a prominent mother figure of the same race, that authority shifts from girl to adult, and girls remain within the bounds of childhood. In The Blossom Shop series, for instance, Mrs. Carter is responsible for creating "smooth grooves" in this southern home—not the girls (57). This relationship now appears more similar to ones in northern children's literatures, such as Jo March and Marmee. Gene and the Carter girls do not show adults how to be proper southerners; instead, Mullins positions girls as the students who need to learn these lessons from their mothers. As a result, southern girls in series books receive less of an opportunity to act as protectors of their homes, families, and cultures.

This transition from mammy to white mother also indicates a larger shift in thinking about southern children as the protected, rather than the protectors. At a time with compulsory education, less white child labor, and more middle-class homes, the

early twentieth century saw more children experience a sheltered stage of life with extended time to play and mature (Mintz 199). These children did not need to be the individuals physically or emotionally protecting their families. In addition, proponents of racial uplift like W. E. B. Du Bois envisioned new roles for black children as the protected members of middle-class families, with these ideas appearing in magazines like *The Crisis* and *The Brownies' Book.* Southern children's literature participates in this transition; however, most texts were still written by white authors and mask the reality that many southern children were still vulnerable at this time. The children of sharecroppers had physically demanding work in cotton fields, and black teenagers suffered from sexual exploitation while working in white homes. To construct white southern girls as the protected, therefore, means also denying that same designation to black southern girls. No matter whether writers show southern girls as protectors or the protected, they still privilege the experiences of white girls over their black counterparts. Southern girlhood in children's books suggests that southern conceptions of protection are always racially charged.

Ruth Fielding Goes Inside The Plantation

Like The Blossom Shop series, Emerson's *Ruth Fielding Down in Dixie or Great Times in the Land of Cotton* also shows girls in more twentieth-century domestic sites. Published between 1913 and 1934, the Ruth Fielding series was one of the more successful publications of the Stratemeyer Syndicate, a business that mass-produced series fiction with ghostwriters, several of which wrote under the pseudonym Alice B.

Emerson.[58] As an influence on later series such as Nancy Drew, the Ruth Fielding books feature an independent girl from New York who solves mysteries and shares adventures with a group of female friends. The series follows Ruth through boarding school, college, World War I, a job in the film industry, and marriage. In the tenth book, *Ruth Fielding Down in Dixie*, Ruth travels throughout the South with her friends Helen, a northerner, and Nettie, a native of Louisiana. The girls spend the majority of their time visiting the Merredith plantation near Charleston, South Carolina, which belongs to Nettie's aunt Mrs. Parsons—another adult white female character who develops a close bond with teenage girls. Since this story is set in the early twentieth century, it perpetuates many characteristics of the plantation myth on a New South plantation, such as a Big House and slave quarters containing a "laughing, happy crowd" of residents "bowing and smiling" at their mistress, Mrs. Parsons (98). Yet this plantation diverges from the spatial and racial patterns of earlier texts, perhaps because of the time period in which it was written and the fact that the protagonist is not southern. This story is about Ruth observing southern culture, rather than protecting it. In its representation of this plantation, *Ruth Fielding Down in Dixie* questions and provides insight into two features of southern girlhood in earlier children's texts: the codependent, interracial pair and the agrarian aspects of southern girlhood.

Like *The Blossom Shop, Ruth Fielding Down in Dixie* participates in the early-twentieth-century trend to separate white and black southern girls into different locations. For example, the one southern white girl in the book, Nettie, has a black maid named

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[58] According to Jennifer White on the *Vintage Series Books for Girls…and a Few for Boys* website, W. Bert Foster wrote the first 19 books in the series, including *Ruth Fielding Down in Dixie.* Foster was also known as a writer of dime novels, westerns, and detective fiction.

Norma. In one scene, Norma accompanies Ruth's gang to a hotel near the plantation. When the girls become stuck in the hotel during a flood, Norma feels afraid, and Nettie remarks, "I won't take this useless child with me anywhere again" (155). This exchange between Nettie and Norma illustrates a pattern in early-twentieth-century series fiction where authors no longer link black and white southern girlhood as codependent experiences. In fact, black girls rarely appear in early-twentieth-century series fiction, and Ruth Fielding is one of the few series that shows a white southern girl interacting with a black woman other than a mammy. Yet Nettie dismisses Norma, an act signifying the omission of younger black women and girls throughout early-twentieth-century series fiction. She suggests that they are no longer confined to the same spaces. Without Norma's presence, Nettie cannot define herself in opposition to her, which makes her seem less southern.

A major goal of this project has been to highlight the regional variations of American girlhood, which this scene with Norma illustrates. Norma's few appearances in the story align her and Nettie with the interracial pairs portrayed in earlier books, such as Topsy and Eva. Since Nettie is the only southerner among the white girls and the only one to have a black maid, she indicates that interracial work relationships still distinguish southern girlhood. Yet Norma is merely a servant instead of a playmate or companion, and Nettie can function independently from her. Norma is "useless" to her (155). In effect, *Ruth Fielding* demonstrates how southern people still share distinct racial connections; however, the relationship between girls is not as intertwined as it was in earlier children's texts, which correlates with the culture of segregation in which this book was written. At a time when black girls worked in white homes but were not living

there and raised with white girls, characters like Nettie and Norma protect antebellum racial values in more "adult" ways—solely through a relationship of work. *Ruth Fielding* thus illuminates how play tied together black and white southern girls in earlier children's books. With characters like Sweetest Susan and Drusilla, their experiences of work as play makes southern girlhood distinct from girls in other regions. In the books examined in this project, friendly play enables girls to protect a white supremacist version of the South in powerful but damaging ways.

Norma and Nettie also underscore how southern girlhood is not a monolithic category. When applying a regional lens to children's literature, we see variations within regional experiences of childhood or adolescence, and we avoid overlooking the ways these variations create degrading depictions of certain girls, such as black girls like Norma. It is unknown whether Norma actually is a child, adolescent, or an infantilized adult, but by calling Norma a "useless child," Nettie implies that black domestic workers remain confined to a category of childhood regardless of their ages (155). Even though Nettie is a teenager and has not yet reached adulthood, she also indicates that she is not a "child" like Norma. In this region, whiteness gives girls authority, while blackness makes them subordinate, and these constructions of race are the primary factors shaping different versions of southern girlhood.

With this break between Norma and Nettie, *Ruth Fielding* suggests that southern girlhood in series fiction shifts away from a regional biracial experience and towards more national forms of girlhood. After all, Norma barely appears in the story, leaving Nettie to align herself with Ruth and Helen who do not have black maids. Now, the girls from different regions—but of the same race—share experiences. One of these shared

experiences during the girls' time on the Merredith plantation involves spending more time at the Big House than on the grounds or in outlying areas. Unlike characters like Gertrude in abolitionist fiction or The Little Colonel, girls in *Ruth Fielding* do not act as emissaries of the Big House, implementing its values in the peripheral areas of the plantation. For instance, Ruth and her friends do not visit the quarters as often as girls in abolitionist or postbellum plantation fiction and thus no longer claim as much white authority in black domestic spaces. This shift appears somewhat progressive, and it could potentially give black characters more privacy and more agency; however, when considered in the context of the early-twentieth-century culture of segregation, this separation of white and black characters still perpetuates a racist system. Since they are expected to inhabit separate spaces, segregation implies that individuals are different based on race.

Because of this spatial shift, girls do not need to be outside as much, and southern girlhood appears less agrarian. Unlike Tweetty and Popsy, who feel "despondent at the prospect of staying in the house" during a storm, the girls in *Ruth Fielding* feel the exact opposite (Pyrnelle 41-42). As the narrator explains, "Being kept indoors by the rain was not altogether a privation. At least, the three girls staying at the Big House did not find it such" (Emerson 123). The outdoors does not produce girls' personal happiness, and they all feel this way regardless of where they were raised. Along with the previous example of Nettie and Norma's working relationship, play is no longer a vehicle for protecting white supremacist codes, and outside activity seems less necessary to promote a regional identity. Additionally, by locating the girls inside the Big House, *Ruth Fielding* does not show girls as protectors of agrarian values. Because of the Big House's layout, the girls

do not miss their time outside. During the storm, "The girls had the big porch to exercise upon" (126). Emerson still promotes girls' athleticism, but unlike representations of southern girls in other types of children's literature, Ruth and her friends do not need to venture into the yard, grounds, or outlying woods for this exercise. Though partly outside, the porch is still an enclosed space that restricts their movement more than an open area in the yard or woods. This shift of location from the grounds to the porch might seem to centralize the Big House, but it also suggests that rural, outdoor landscapes are not the only way to engage in active behaviors. In addition, it implies that improving one's physical health is the main benefit to gain from active behaviors. As a result, the large space of the plantation starts to have less of an influence on girls, and girlhood appears less agrarian and therefore less southern.

In short, the girls in *Ruth Fielding* use enclosed domestic space differently from southern girls in the four types of literature examined in this project. This shift from outside to inside demonstrates the prominence and importance of outdoor spaces for southern girls in earlier texts. For these girls, outdoor activity increased their physical wellness and improved their emotional health, and it helped them to practice a system of white superiority. These racial aspects make girlhood in abolitionist, Confederate, postbellum plantation, and family stories more agrarian and more distinctly southern.

Madge Morton and a Floating Girlhood

Focusing on a different type of home than *The Blossom Shop* or *Ruth Fielding Down in Dixie,* the Madge Morton series also conceptualizes domestic space in a way that deemphasizes the features I have identified as southern throughout this dissertation. Written by a virtually unknown writer named Amy D. V. Chalmers, the Madge Morton

series contains four books about friends from boarding school who spend their summers and vacations on a houseboat in the Chesapeake Bay. Two of the girls, Madge and Eleanor, are southerners from an "old estate in Virginia" (7), while the others, Phyllis and Lillian, are from New England. As with Ruth Fielding's gang, the four girls in *Madge Morton* share similar traits and behaviors, such as their desire for a summer vacation spent together on a houseboat. They do not choose to spend their time in regional homes, but they purchase and decorate the houseboat, creating their own collective home without distinct regional qualities. The first book of the series, *Madge Morton, Captain of the Merry Maid,* particularly illustrates how this houseboat enables a girlhood that transcends regional boundaries.

Through these four characters, Chalmers depicts southern girlhood as a white experience. In fact, Chalmers represents this era's culture of segregation in that there are almost no black characters in locations around the Chesapeake Bay where black individuals would have lived and worked. The girls buy their houseboat in Baltimore, which was a southern city where segregation was strictly enforced during the early twentieth century. In 1910, Baltimore was the first city in the country to legalize residential segregation. Garrett Power refers to the ordinances enacted from 1910-1913 as "apartheid statute[s]" that promoted racial discrimination (289). As an all-white home, Madge's houseboat participates in and enforces this segregated system. The narrator even describes it as a "white palace" (48). By focusing on white girls and less on problematic interracial bonds, Chalmers' books—and early-twentieth-century series books in general—are not less racist; rather, they use segregated spaces to hide their society's racial tensions. The absence of black characters in *Madge Morton*, much like their

absence in Confederate texts, indicates a heightened sense of white superiority. What changes in series fiction is that southern girls challenge regional boundaries as a result of the segregated setting. In the *Madge Morton* series, white southern girls no longer inhabit interracial spaces, so they appear more similar to girls from other regions. This setting indicates how the integrated spaces of earlier children's texts, such as the bedroom in the Big House where Tweetty and Popsy sleep, make possible a distinct regional version of girlhood.

In addition to race, the Madge Morton series calls attention to the importance of domestic boundaries in shaping girlhood. Unlike plantations and houses in small towns, a houseboat creates domestic spaces that are not in fixed locations. Because of this feature, Beatrice Griswold promotes houseboating as an enjoyable vacation in *The Craftsman*, an early-twentieth-century magazine about different housing designs. Griswold writes, "There is another advantage enjoyed by houseboat dwellers: It is not necessary to spend the whole vacation time in one place, for the moorings can be slipped at will and the floating house can find anchorage in almost any spot that appeals to the skipper and crew" (402). Since the immediate surroundings change, such as the dock, the waterways, or the view, this type of home contains a spatial organization that fluctuates. For instance, when a houseboat attaches to a dock, the dock then becomes part of the domestic space, but the dock no longer forms part of that layout when the boat is in transit or anchored in the water. *Madge Morton* represents this type of spatial fluidity as their boat the *Merry Maid* travels to various docks in the Chesapeake Bay. As the narrator comments, the girls feel "at home on the water as much as on land" (14). Here, Madge and her friends are not limited to one type of domestic space. In fact, a houseboat does not even restrict the girls

to the South because it can travel to different regions and give them a more national experience of girlhood.

Because the home is not stationary, Chalmers suggests that southern girlhood is more mobile in the early twentieth century. One way this houseboat creates more mobility for girls is through bringing the characters into closer proximity to the outdoors. This houseboat contains four small rooms and an open deck with "a steamer chair…and a great many sofa cushions…to be used as deck furniture" (59). With an open deck to use as a living area, Madge and her friends are constantly in unenclosed, exterior spaces. The chair and sofa cushions allow the girls to relax and spend extended amounts of time outside. Moreover, the narrator explains that the four rooms "opened into each other, and each room had a small door and window facing the deck" (58). With bedrooms opening directly onto the deck, moving between indoors and outdoors is even more accessible. Because of its location on the water, the houseboat lets the girls engage in athletic activities such as rowing in a smaller boat, swimming in the river, and exploring in the woods near their dock. The frequent use of the outdoors makes these girls appear similar to southern girls in earlier children's books, especially since many plantations were located near water in order to ship crops to market; however, unlike girls who live on plantations or rural estates, Madge and her friends are not limited to swimming or exploring within certain property lines or within certain rural communities.

Madge's houseboat allows for a girlhood filled with outdoor activity in a greater variety of locations, and this difference highlights boundedness is a central feature of southern girlhood in earlier texts. As I've argued throughout this project, southern girls have opportunities for spatial mobility: they cross barriers between inside and outside;

slave and slaveholding girls enter both white and black spaces; Confederate girls access public and private parts of the home front; and girls like Lloyd Sherman and Hazel Tyler have class mobility when they move between the homes of family members belonging to different social classes. In their roles as protectors of the South, southern girls typically shift between gender and age categories, often defending their way of life more effectively and more powerfully through this movement. However, this mobility is not limitless. In comparison to girls in *The Blossom Shop, Ruth Fielding,* and *Madge Morton,* the characters I've examined in the previous four chapters remain within spaces that have some sort of border separating them from surrounding areas, such as a plantation, the home front, the Cabbage Patch, or Hazel's tenant farm community. These boundaries create a more regionally specific version of girlhood by letting only certain spaces impact girls' behaviors and beliefs.

For instance, Madge's unbounded domain emphasizes what makes outdoor activity unique for southern girls in earlier texts. Because Madge enters a variety of spaces and moves between different regions, she is not responsible for maintaining the values of one particular space. In contrast, the girls in abolitionist, Confederate, postbellum plantation, and family stories are expected to protect the South's racial and agrarian values, which intertwine to affect their experiences outside. Most of what these girls do outside, from climbing trees to sitting in the garden to running errands, supports a system that privileges whiteness above blackness. Such outdoor traits were common for American tomboys during this time period, and Michelle Abate argues that white girlhood was linked with athleticism for eugenic purposes—to prepare girls for their future as mothers who could bear healthy white children (xxviii). Yet in the South, as my

project's regional perspective demonstrates, black girls are also expected to contribute to that racist agenda, particularly since slave girls are expected to grow up and bear more workers for the system. Southern outdoor athleticism, therefore, depends on participation from girls of both races. Both black and white girls mix work with play, although a slaveholding girl's "work" is substantially different from that of a slave, even if writers suggest they are similar.

In contrast, girlhood in *Madge Morton* appears less agrarian because it serves a more personal agenda. Madge and her friends use outdoor activities to promote themselves as independent. When a friend suggests that the houseboat is unsafe for the girls, Madge explains, "Wouldn't Phil be angry if she heard you say that! It makes her furious to hear a mean or a boy even intimate that girls can't take care of themselves. Why, we can swim and run and jump, and we could put up a really brave fight if it were necessary" (117). Madge indicates that girls engage in athletic behaviors such as swimming and running for the purpose of demonstrating their physical strength. Since they can succeed with a "brave fight," they have the ability to prevail through physical efforts, which continually strengthen through athletic pursuits. With these skills, the girls do not need anyone else to take care of them. Outdoor activities enable them to protect themselves from harm, rather than protecting regional identities and values. Because all of the girls share these swimming, running, and jumping skills, Chalmers infers that girls from different regions are capable of and enjoy the same pursuits. Like the houseboat as a floating dwelling place, Chalmers depicts a type of floating girlhood where girls can detach from regional traits and drift towards a more national experience of girlhood.

Ultimately, Madge's floating girlhood indicates that girlhood is agrarian when playing outside serves a regional agenda instead of a personal one. Southern girlhood in most children's texts published between 1852-1920 exists inside both ideological and spatial barriers. For both white and black girls, racial protocols establish parameters for behaviors—how they can act in certain places, what they can say, and who holds authority there. Even the codependent interracial bond that characterizes many fictional southern girls keeps these characters bound to each other. These girls go beyond the walls of their houses, but race creates intangible walls they cannot cross. In order for southern girls to most effectively protect their regional identities and codes, they must stay within certain spatial and racial enclosures. Therefore, viewing girlhood with a regional lens provides insight into the restrictions southern culture imposes on children.

This regional lens also offers a more diverse approach to understanding girlhood, southern children's literature, and southern girlhood and womanhood in literature. Child readers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did not receive a monolithic image of girlhood—or even of southern girlhood. This regional perspective could lead to a greater attention to diversity in girlhood throughout America, identifying variations among girls in Appalachia, the Southwest, the Pacific coast, the Midwest, or New England. Furthermore, this regional lens provides particular insight into the ways girls experience family and home differently depending on where they live or where they visit. Considering region pinpoints how designations of gender, race, class, and legal status are interrelated in fictional depictions of girlhood. As the trend to depict a codependent bond between slaveholding and enslaved girls indicates, definitions of southern girlhood rely on the interplay between race, class, and legal status. For the characters examined in this

project, girlhood is the stage where these connections form, and girls play a crucial role in forming them. As we resist universalizing girlhood, we see where writers include and exclude black girls from definitions of girlhood, which identifies girlhood as an important way to understand race in individual regions.

In addition, by focusing on the spaces of girlhood, this project contends that agrarianism influences the domestic and racial constructions of southern childhood. While scholars have discussed how race impacts southern childhood, these racial factors also intertwine with agrarian ones to create a unique southern identity.[59] Children's writers use the outdoors to define southern girlhood, showing how girls romp around outside to bring southern domestic protocols into larger areas beyond their houses. These outdoor pursuits illustrate how southern agrarian values enable girls to cross what other regions might identify as gender lines. When white southern girls climb trees, run through the woods, and ride wild horses, these typical gender-bending traits are more normative in that girls promote the values of southern homes. Black girls occasionally join in similar outdoor pursuits, and they also do not violate gender designations because writers do not apply those codes of masculinity and femininity to black girls. Unlike boys, girls use feminine play, companionship with girls of the opposite race, nursing, literacy, service to family, and emotional efforts to protect a sense of southernness.

Finally, this project illustrates that age impacts how women experience the South. Through their play activities and roles as daughters, girl characters go to places and protect the South in certain ways that adults do not and cannot. Children's writers express the view that girls have the power to impact their regions—even if by doing so they

[59] These scholars include Robin Bernstein, Paula Connolly, Donnarae MacCann, and Gail Schmunk Murray.

reinforce white supremacist agendas. By focusing on what girls can accomplish differently or more successfully than adult women, children's literature works in tandem with adult women's literature to deconstruct southern conceptions of protection. Fictional girls suggest that one does not have to be adult, white, or male to protect southern cultural values. Instead, multiple types of protection are necessary to preserve antebellum lifestyles, which is a valuable concept to impress upon white child readers if adults want them to help save societies that are being attacked, abolished, and lost. These writers emphasize how contributions from both black and white southern girls are a crucial part of maintaining this society's existence. This mission is so important that southern girls can disrupt age and gender categories in their efforts to protect racial and agrarian values.

Through showing southern girls protecting Dixie, children's writers also position child readers as protectors of southern culture. Authors create fictional worlds where southern children can envision a South more peaceful than the one they currently live in. Romanticizing southern homes and lifestyles, writers allow children to keep returning to an antebellum past where individuals have prescribed roles in a white supremacist hierarchy. They enable child readers to imagine agrarian landscapes as most beneficial, even at a time when these environments are burning during Civil War battles, falling into disrepair during Reconstruction, and perpetuating the damaging conditions of slavery. By creating these imaginary spaces into which children can enter, reading was an act of preservation and memorialization for children within and outside of the South. Indeed, children throughout America could preserve these ideas, as northern children read many of these texts, such as *Hazel* and the abolitionist books. The books by Annie Fellows Johnston and Alice Hegan Rice were also national best sellers; therefore, many of these

texts suggest regional girlhoods need to be understood on a national scale. This undertaking continued throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries until series fiction reconceptualized some southern identities, protocols, and values. Ultimately, characters like Little Eva, Ellen Hunter, Drusilla, and Hazel indicate that both fictional and real girls can build the walls surrounding regional identities; however, as series fiction suggests, girls can also float across those regional barriers and explore what lies beyond them.

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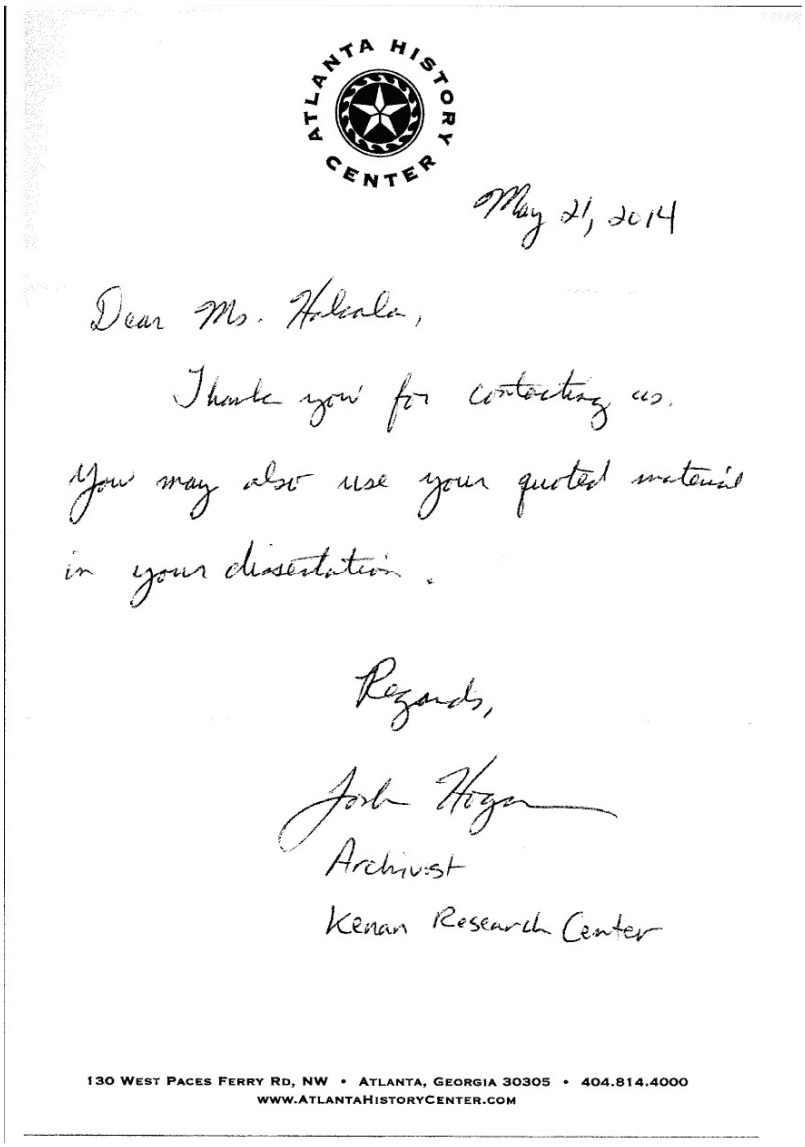

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